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No. 343.

\$2.50
a Year.

Published Weekly by Beadle and Adams,
No. 93 WILLIAM ST., NEW YORK.

Price,
Five Cents. Vol. XXVII.



WITH A SKILLFUL TRIP DRISCOLL SENT SHIELDS SPINNING HEADLONG IN THE
FAST FLOWING TIDE.

By Ed. Wheeler.

Mike, the Bowery Detective;

OR,

Peleg Prancer of Vermont.

BY ED. L. WHEELER,

AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK" NOVELS, "ROSE-BUD ROB" NOVELS, ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEGINNING OF A PECULIAR CASE.

"I'm Detective Mike, of the Bowery—oh! Whatever I do, I always make go,
I'm a werry fly lad,
But you bet I'm no cad—
I'm Detective Mike, o' the Bowery—oh!"

THE sing-song tone in which the above verse was uttered, together with the reckless abandon of the singer, proclaimed that he was a little, if not considerably, the worse, from the effects of Bowery stimulant.

Yet, in every sense, the young man evidently understood what he was about.

He was one of that species of humanity, the rather "loud" and "fast" young man of the Metropolis, with the shrewdness, ready wit and common sense of an experienced man of the world.

Somewhere between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one years, and not hardly of the average stature, he was, withal, possessed of a wiry and graceful figure, which, "dressed to kill" as it was, showed plainly that the owner was not a stranger to physical exercise.

In face, he was not to say handsome, although a keen observer would have found features very pleasing to the eye.

It was rather a hawkish face—that is to say, the features were sharp of cast—a fact that no-wise detracted from their expression of sagacity or intelligence. The face was as smooth as a beardless face could be; the mouth wore an expression of waggishness, and his eyes were of the deepest black and most penetrating power.

His hair, on the contrary, was of a light-brown color, and as curly as it possibly could be.

His attire was in the height of prevailing fashion, and by no means inexpensive, comprising all the novelties required to make a first-class blood—gold-headed cane, eye-glasses, the daintiest of gloves, polished "dicer," and no end of jewelry, all of which was superior in quality to the generality of that worn by the modern "dude"—which, evidently, it was Mike, the Bowery Detective's intention to personate.

He had serenely invaded one of the numerous saloons that flank either side of the Bowery, and after casting a furtive glance at the few rough-looking customers the place afforded, he fronted up to the bar, and uttered the single word:

"Whisk!"

The bartender, a large-built, hard-faced man, who had plainly passed through some of life's trying experiences, gave the young blood a sharp glance.

"Hello! Is it you, Mike?" he demanded. "What's come over you, boy? Not on another racket, I hope?"

"You hope?" Mike echoed. "You must have struck the wrong vocation, Terry, to hope feller hed shet down on booz. What's the thing, though, Terry, that makes yer so 'specially terested?"

"A good reason, Mike. There's better a more profitable employment for you than soak yerself with bad rum. Ye'r' as cute a detective as ther' is in New York, and there's a open ter sling yerself in!"

Mike's eyes kindled with enthusiasm.

"Is there a job to be done, Terry, that I git away from the regulars?"

"You bet there is! and I judge it is a fat one too! You know that me brother Pat is port up at the Hotel Devonshire, Forty-second street an' has a clipper eye for all that's going on. Well, here's what he has telegraphed me!"

He handed Mike an American Rapid telegram which was worded as follows:

"TERRY:—Send up the fellow ye call Mike, the Bowery Detective. Tart job for him."

"PAT REILLY."

The Bowery Blood scratched his curly head, perused the message a second time, and then glanced at his handsome gold watch.

"It's not late yet, and I'll trot up and see what's wanted. There ain't much show for me unless the job's private, for the regular force contrive to ring in ahead of me at every opportunity. Bob Driscoll is mainly the cause of it too. Ye know he and I ain't on hip-smackin terms, an' bein' in with the regulars an' the police, his main aim seems ter be ter crush me and baffle whatever plans I try to push forward."

"Why don't yez black his eye for him?" Terry demanded, indignantly. "Sure, I'll be afther doin' it if he runs afoul me."

"I've got it in for him!" Mike declared with a nod, "but prefer to catch him in some crookedness an' get him bounced, rather than have a scrappin'-match with him. Well, I'm off after the job, and will wait till I'm done before you set out the decanter!"

And with a peculiar smile upon his hawkish face he left the saloon, at a rather unsteady gait.

Walking down the Bowery to Grand street, he took the up-town Elevated cars, and was soon landed at Forty-second street near the Grand Central depot.

From here he made his way direct to the Devonshire, but a few yards distant.

Entering the office he made an examination of the register, purchased a cigar, and seated himself to wait for the appearance of Pat, who was not present.

While puffing at "the weed," he made a close optical inventory of the several persons who were lounging about, and came to the immediate conclusion that none of them were in need of a detective's assistance.

He was unacquainted with the hostelry's frigid clerk, and concluded that about the most sensible thing he could do was to make his inquiries of porter Reilly.

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That individual soon appeared, and was a burly, good-natured-looking fellow, with the map of Ireland indelibly engraved upon his countenance.

As he appeared to be at leisure, Mike hopped into the boot-blackening chair, and signaled Pat to give him a shine, knowing that he could thus engage him in conversation without the usual bad results of being scowled at by the hotel clerk.

Pat produced his tools and set to work with a will, but Mike checked his energetic movements with a gentle reminder.

"Not so fast, me buck-o!" he said. "I've a productive cornfield under cultivation where you're plowin'. Then, too, I've got a flea for your ear."

Pat looked up with a speculative squint.

"Phat is it?" he demanded. "Be yees Mike?"

"I happen to be that same majestic being, at yer service," was the reply. "I got wind of the job up here, and I am before you in all my pristine glory."

"Sh! Kape a still tongue on yez. Whin the clock yonder strikes ten, give yer card to the clerk an' tell him that yez want to see Mr. Peleg Prancer. Whin ye see him ye must make yer own bizness."

"Bet I'll do that, if there's any to be done," Mike assured, with a wink. "What's the nature of the beast?"

"Och! bedad, an' it's a quare one he is; frish from the counthry, too, an' as green as a bit o' shamrock."

"He's my mutton, then!" Mike declared. "I'm particular fond o' tacklin' cases where the plaintiff don't know more'n the counsel."

After his leathers were polished up like a mirror, Mike proceeded to the office counter and threw down his card.

"M. MAVERICK,

"Private Detective,"

was what was inscribed upon it.

"Be kind enough to send that up to Mr. Prancer—Room 28," Mike said, referring to the register.

The clerk gave him a searching stare, and touched the bell for a call-boy, whom he dispatched with the card.

"Do you know anything about the party in 28?" the clerk asked, still regarding Mike with freezing keenness.

"I have not that honor, I believe," the Bowery boy replied. "I was sent for, and hence, I am here."

"Mr. Prancer sent for you, eh?"

"I presume so. What of it?"

"Oh, nothing in particular, only that I regard him as an exceedingly eccentric person. He came rushing into the hotel to-day, like a Texan steer on the rampage, and it was some time before we could get him quieted down sufficiently to send him to a room. Unless you work the collattus before you do the case, I'd advise you to have little to do with him."

Mike eyed the clerk sharply, only concealing his surprise by an effort.

That a hotel clerk, especially one belonging to such an establishment as the Devonshire,

should contribute such a remarkable bit of advice, was beyond Mike's understanding.

He was just deliberating on what answer to make, when he was saved the trouble by the call-boy's return.

"Mr. Prancer will see the gentleman in his room. This way, sir," and the boy led off.

Mike followed, and was directly ushered into the presence of Mr. Peleg Prancer, of Porcupine Corners, Vermont.

Mr. Prancer was lying upon a sofa, and motioned Mike to a seat without arising.

He was a long, lank, rawboned Yankee, of uncertain age, probably past thirty years, yet not over fifty. His angular features, with high cheek-bones, sunken eyes, a capacious mouth, and a stubble of yellowish beard of three weeks' growth, made it pretty hard to guess whether he was a young or a middle-aged man. His hair was of the same color as his beard, and had evidently not known the use of a comb or brush for a long time.

He was dressed in a suit of coarse homespun stuff—wore stogy boots of large size, a flaring red necktie, a huge steel watch-chain; and a battered, ancient-style plug hat, and time-worn umbrella lay upon the floor, beside the couch.

All in all, he had a decidedly backwoods country appearance, and was a curiosity upon which Mike feasted his eyes with avidity.

His homespun suit was well dusted with flour, a fact that tended to indicate that Peleg Prancer was the miller of that far-away burg, Porcupine Corners.

"Waal, young man, what d'ye want?" Mr. Peleg Prancer demanded, turning his head sufficiently to get a fair view of the Bowery detective.

"I believe my card expressed the nature of my errand," Mike responded, the while taking in the "points" of the Yankee. "I believe you are in need of the services of a detective."

"Darned ef ye hain't hit the nail plum on the head, young feller! That's jest the thing I do want. Reckon you count yerself competent to fill the bill, eh?"

"I have chosen that line of business as a profession," Mike assured, with a smile, "and am open for engagement whenever or wherever my services are needed."

"Waal, I'll swow! Ye don't look big an' strong enuff ter milk twenty cows, darned ef ye do."

"I hope I may never be called upon to pass through so trying an ordeal," Mike declared.

"What! didn't ye never milk cows?"

"Oh, no! I'll give ye a friendly tip on that."

"Been fetched up in a college, an' fed on sponge cake, hey?"

"Cert. Bin through Harvard, Yale, Blackwell's Island, the Royal Conservatory of—"

"Great Jeminy! Ye don't tell me!"

"You have heard me articulate."

"An' so yeou hev turned out a detective, hey?"

"I am proud to say I have. Young in years, though I am, I am proud to say that I am foremost in the first-class ranks of the detective element. It will be but the matter of a few days

until I become chief of the whole detective force of this vast city."

"Waal, hy gol! ye don't say so! You're the very chap I'm arter then. I want a feller that is smart as chain-lightnin', ye see, an' I suppose you calculate ye kin fill the bill?"

"If I can't, Honorable Mr. Prancer, there isn't a chap in New York that can!"

Mr. Prancer seemed deeply impressed at having honorable prefixed to his title.

"By the way, sir, how is your milling business getting on at Porcupine Corners?" Mike pursued. "I have frequently seen your name mentioned in New York papers as a producer of the finest flour in Vermont."

"Indeed!" Mr. Prancer looked a little doubtful about this. "Thet's the furst I ever knewd I was so fur known from home. I suppose tho', et aire so. Ye see, I don't take no back seat at grist-grindin' nowhar over the State o' Vermont."

"Oh! that is a well-known fact. You see, it doesn't take a man of your well-known business standing long to get free advertising in mercantile circles. I presume if half of our reputed rich men of New York had as good a standing to-day as you, Mr. Prancer, Bradstreet's would not have to chronicle so many failures. But, now, let us get down to business. Business is business, ye know in the Metropolis, and we of the perfesh don't have much time to do chores, except for money. You, I believe, are in want of a detective?"

"Lord a'mighty, yes!"

"When did ye arrive here, Mr. Prancer?"

"This mornin', from Hartford. I cum there from Porkypine Corners."

"I suppose, accordingly, your mission is a very important one?"

"I'll be gol-darned ef it ain't. I never was so mad afore in all my born days. I s'pose I acted kinder mad down-stairs, but I was mad, an' when Peleg Prancer gits mad, he's wuss'n a Mexican lion!"

Whether Mr. Prancer's education in natural history had been sadly neglected, or whether he intended the reference to the Mexican lion as a bit of Yankee facetiousness, Mike was hardly prepared to judge.

Prancer's face betrayed nothing.

"I hear you was rather violent below," Mike said, "and would like if you desire to employ me, to have a brief explanation of the case I have to undertake."

Prancer took a chew of tobacco from a tin box and then began:

"Waal, I cackilate what I tell to ye won't go no further?"

"Certainly not, except that necessity requires it to advance the case."

"Kerrect. Ye see, I want the thing did up in brown shape, an' tain't no use ter hev everybody stickin' their snoot inter the bizness. Ye know my name—Peleg Prancer, Eskwire, o' Porkypine Corners, Vermont. Guess 'most nigh everybody knows where Porkypine Corners is. 'ca'se there's more porkypines killed tharabouts every year thun in any other part of the State."

"Waal, I own the grist-mill thar, an' ef I do say it, I hev laid away quite a snug sum fer a rainy day, an' we allers has plenty to eat in the

bargain. On course we don't dress ter kill but allers hes enuff on so we never freeze our shins in cold weather."

"I take it you are a Benedict?"

"Gol-darn yer pieter, no! I'm a Prancer every day in a week and twice on Sunday. Old Jake Benedict, the infernal mean skunk, lives a mile below me, an' he's meaner than thunder, he is. Why, would ye l'ieve it, he goes an' lets down the rail fence arter dark, an' lets his cows inter the neighbors' grain."

"But, sir, you misunderstand me. I—"

"No sech a darned thing. I know jest all about it. Ther' ain't only one Benedict in the neighborhood; an' that's old Jake. Everybody knows him. He's the dirtiest scalawag in Vermont."

"But, let me explain: here, in New York, we have a fashion of calling married men Benedicts. I meant to propound the idea, sir, thet ye were a married man."

"Me married? Gosh all-fish-hooks, I should say so! Why, young feller, I've got a gal as big as you, an' it's all on account o' her thet I am heer!"

"Ah! yes. Now you're gettin' down to business. Go ahead."

"An' so ye call married men Benedicts, d'ye, hyer in New York?"

"Of course."

"Waal, let me tell ye one thing, young feller—don't yer never come up ter Porkypine Corners an' call none o' the married folke Benedicts, ef ye don't want ter git yer carcass filled full o' buckshot. Why, ef ye'd call a feller a Benedict, thar, ye'd get tar-an'-feathered quicker'n the jerk of a lamb's tail—an' a fine-wool ewe lamb, at that!"

Mike did not smile. He was the one person of a hundred who could compose his features, even when he was ready to burst with laughter.

He saw that the Vermonter was liable to prattle on all night, without coming to the point, if he was not checked.

"Well, what about this girl of yours?"

"Oh! yas. Waal, she skipped."

"Ah! eloped, eh?"

"That's what ye call it, I suppose. 'Skipped' is good enough fer me. Jest ter think—I fetched thet gal up 'cordin' ter Scripter, till she was seventeen, an' then she up an' l-ft her hum' an' parents. Heer, read this letter—et will tell ye a darned sight more than I kin, in an hour's talk."

He took a couple of sheets of paper from his pocket, which were covered with writing, and handed them to Mike.

That individual took time to light a cigar, and then began the perusal.

The letter was written in a fine, clear style of chirography, and ran thus:

"AUGUST 10, 188—

"DEAR FATHER:—By the time you receive this, you will doubtless have learned that I have left my home forever. It will be useless to search for me, for I have gone in quest of him whom I love better than I do the happy home I have always had—until recently. You know to what I refer, by this, and it is useless for me to say more on the subject. When, in all my young life, was I ever more shocked than when your hand turned against poor

Hal? It nearly drove me frantic, but I had courage enough to aid him to escape the harsh penalties of a terrible accusation—an accusation as unjust as the world is unmerciful.

"Then, too, other troubles have been weighing me down. I have left behind me letters that I have received during the last two months—letters and newspaper clippings, which, though a mystery to me, are of course intended but for one purpose—to forever ruin my life and happiness. I dare not remain to face it all; my heart is broke—my existence is a hideous terror to me.

"So, forgiving all, and praying for all to forgive me, whom I may have disgraced by this step, I am going away. I shall find Ned, and—be happy. Duplicates of the letters, and clippings, have fallen in other hands, and through them only you may be able to find out who is my unknown persecutor or persecutors, be they one or more.

"Your daughter,
"GRACIE."

CHAPTER II.

SIFTING!

MIKE read the letter but once, then looked suddenly up from the missive and gave the Vermonter a keen glance.

"Who is this Gracie?" he demanded, sharply.

The Yankee's face did not change an iota from its original and usual expression of stolidity.

"Who is she? Darn it all, didn't I tell ye in the fu'st start she was my darter? What more d'ye want?"

"Excuse my abruptness," and the Bowery Detective gazed hard at the floor. "Gracie is your daughter. She had a lover, and his name was Ned?"

"Yes. Ned Shields."

"Edward Shields?"

"Yas—Ned, fer short."

"Judging by the tone of your daughter's letter, Edward was accused of doing something naughty?"

"Gol-darn his picter, yes! He war a thief—a out-an'-out thief!"

"Ah! What were the circumstances of the case?"

"Waal, ye see, this feller Shields was a nephew of old Simon Sanger, at the Corners, an' used to post his books. Sanger war a speculator, and one thing another, and, next to me, was the richest chap there. Ned was a poor relation, ye see, and was sorter took in ter his uncle's employ for charity's sake."

"I see. Go on."

"Waal, old Sanger an' I warn't much friends, ye know, an' the old cuss objected ter Ned's comin' to see Gracie, an' I perfectly agreed with him, on that, an' Ned an' I had sum words, an' darn his picter, he swore'd he'd have my gal, in spite of me! Then I booted him off 'm the place. Next thing we knowed, thar was a big rumpus. Old Sanger and Ned hed had a split up, an' Ned were bounced, an' ther report were that Sanger's discarded son were ter come back. But he didn't, tho', for some reason or other.

"Waal, within a day or two, there was another sensation. Some one had entered old Sanger's house, through a window, an' stole two thousan' dollars. Ther same night, my best sorrel hoss was stolen, and 'spishun turned

to Ned Shields. A warrant was swore'd out, an' I bein' constable, I was sent after him. But, darn his picter, he was nowhere to be found. The post-offis clerk sed he had heerd him speak o' comin' ter New York. Next day, my gal she cut sticks and run, an' that's the hull of it, 'cept thet I an' heer arter 'em, an' ef I find that darned thief, I'll set him up in the boot business, ye kin bet, purty lively."

"You think he came to New York?"

"Yes."

"And the girl, too?"

"On course she did. She was spooney after him."

"What about the letters and newspaper clippings she alludes to?"

"Didn't find none, 'cept one, and heer that is!"

He extended to Mike a soiled sheet of letter-paper on the top of which was printed:

"WARREN & CO., STOCK BROKERS

144 Hester st., N. Y."

The letter ran as follows:

"MADEMOISELLE GRACIE—

"Once more I warn you that if you do not come to me, and fulfill your promise of marriage, I shall send an officer after you, and there will be quite a scene in your home. Your complicity in executing the forged draft on the bank on Wall street, is suspected, and detectives are on their way to your place. If they gobble onto you, it will be your own fault, for not coming here. Hurry up and execute that check on the First National of Belfast, Maine, and then light out, and come here. It is a hundred-fold safer here, for those of our craft. Mind! If they latch you don't you give me away, and I'll get you out of the scrape. Money, position, and political influence, is a power, nowadays, you know. Should you come, first write, addressing 'B. Y. Z., 12 N. Y. (down town) Herald office,' stating hour of arrival. Your Own, forever, "SQUEEZIX."

This letter was penned in a dashing style of chirography—unquestionably a man's hand-writing.

A faint smile was on Mike's face as he read on.

"This was the only letter you found?" he asked, finally, putting the missive in his pocket.

"Yas."

"Was your daughter always at home?"

"On course she was."

"Did she have any regular company?"

"Not by a darned sight. We allers fetched her up 'cordin' to Scripter, an' she never had a feller 'cept Ned Shields."

"This letter is dated New York, July 7th. Was Shields in Porcupine Corners then?"

"Yas."

"Then you don't suspect him of being in any way connected with the writing of this letter?"

"Guess not, unless he had some cuss heer, a-doin' the job."

"What could be his object in doing such a thing? I infer, from your mention of him, that he loved your daughter."

"Cuss his picter, that's what he sed. He luv'd her enuff, anyhow, to steal my horse and skedaddle."

"Are you positive he was the culprit?"

"On course. Who else did it?"

"A thousand persons might have done it."

JNA

Never condemn a man until sure you have good cause to do so, by the possession of proofs. In my opinion, this Shields is not the man he is pictured."

Mr. Peleg Prancer evidently did not regard this view with any too much favor.

"I 'spect et ain't none o' yer bizness, ef he is or not!" he growled. "Yer hired ter find him—that's all. D'ye see?"

"Certainly! You pay me to find Mr. Edward Shields and turn him over to you."

"You've hit it now!"

"And you, likewise, want me to find your daughter?"

"On course I do!"

"Well, is that all?"

"No, by thunder, no! When she scooted, she tuk a little tin trunk or safe, containin' papers of the utmost value to me. Them must be found, ef we hev ter raise every stone in New York!"

Prancer had arisen, and spoke with unusual vehemence—excitedly, nervously.

His hitherto inscrutable countenance, now wore a hard, grayish expression, that forcibly indicated his nature to be not of the meekest—nor did Mike like the glitter of his eyes.

"What are these papers?" Mike asked quietly.

"None of yer bizness. They haven't nuthin' ter do with the case. I want the feller an' gal—that's all!"

At which it became apparent to Mike that Prancer was playing a part.

"I suppose ye'r' aware that in a city like New York, it will not be an easy job to find 'em?"

"That ain't none o' my affairs. You get paid to find 'em, an' that's your lookout."

"You can give an accurate description of the parties?"

"Yas. Shields is medium figure, an' light-complected, with brown hair an' mustache. He is twenty-four years old, comin' January, an' aire sort of spruced up, like yourself. The gal is seventeen, an' dark complected. She's the purtiest gal at the Corners—has black eyes and hair, and is smart as chain-lightnin'."

"I presume a detective needn't look an hour without findin' 'em, ef he went by that description," Mike observed, dryly. "Have you photos of this precious pair?"

"Yes. Here they aire!"

He handed Mike two cards which evidently had been recently taken.

The one was of a remarkably pretty young lady, of pleasant face—a decided brunette, and one whom it would not be hard to remember, when once seen.

The other portrait was of a man answering somewhat to Prancer's description of Ned Shields—the picture of a good-looking young fellow, who appeared anything but of a villainous type of character.

Although he resembled a hundred and one men to be met daily upon the streets of the Metropolis, he had one distinguishing peculiarity.

Combined with an aristocratic, cultured expression of countenance was a piercing look of the eye, so intense that it would seem it was the intent of the owner of the photo-face to magnetize whomsoever his gaze rested upon.

Mike's experience in the business he had chosen as a profession had not been extensive, but he was naturally a keen student of human character, and his attention was centered for several moments upon the two pictures.

Peleg Prancer at length interrupted him:

"Well, what d'ye make out?"

"Oh! notbin' much. I was memorizing the faces, so I would know them should I by accident lose the photos."

"Ye'r' cute, you aire! D'ye think ye can find the pair?"

"I presume very likely I can. In fact, I think I have seen this gentleman, Mr. Shields."

"Mister Shields! Waal, I'll swow! Ye don't mean to call that scalawag Mister!"

"Certainly, Mr. is a mark of respect that every one ought to use, no matter what be the circumstances."

"You're a quare one. But say, where'd ye see him?"

"That is part of my own professional business. I am not supposed to disclose my secrets gratuitously."

"Oh! ye hain't, eh? Ye want a feller ter give ye a dinner on greenbacks afore ye cum ter time?"

"No, sir. I estimate my expenses on a case, make my charge accordingly, and, if I have anything to part with, I let her go. My motto, however, is: 'Find out much an' give away little till the pie is done.' In other words, the quiet hog drinks the better share of the swill, and puts better and more profitable pork on the market than the squealer does."

"Dunno but ye'r' right. Now ter bizness. What will ye produce the feller, the gal, an' the box an' papers for, within forty-eight hours from now, without fail?"

Mike took a good look at the Vermonter, then glanced at his watch.

"To-night is August 20th, and the time is exactly half-past ten. Within forty-eight hours from date, for the sum of three hundred dollars, I will produce before you Edward Shields and Grace Prancer. Terms: Half cash in advance; balance on delivery!"

Mr. Prancer rapped upon the table before which he now stood.

A closet door opened, and a man stepped out into the room.

"Bob Driscoll!" Mike uttered, springing to his feet.

"You bet!" that worthy uttered, "and I underbid you, just an even hundred."

"That would be nothing new for you to do," Mike cried, his eyes flashing with indignation. "If you want the job, Sneaker Driscoll, you are perfectly welcome to it. Mr. Peleg Prancer's bit of Yankee strategy has satisfied me that I should not desire to wark up his case for him at any price. So the field is entirely open to you."

"Looke here!" Driscoll cried, belligerently.

"What d'ye mean by callin' me 'Sneaker'?"

"I believe that is a title you are very well known by!" Mike retorted, coolly, "and I have a special penchant for the term—it fits ye as closely as though ground in by an emery-wheel."

"Cuss your impudence, I'll thrash the life out of you for that, Mike Maverick!" and Driscoll looked savage.

He was a heavy-set young fellow, possibly three years the Bowery Detective's senior, with a beardless, bull-dog sort of countenance, devoid of refined outlines, and a pair of snaky eyes that were by no means of honest expression.

His attire was neither neat nor attractive, and he looked what he was—a typical rowdying, bullying city rough.

A person would have been led to suppose that he was an overmatch for Mike in a fight, but the Bowery boy was evidently not of that opinion.

"You use pretty strong words, Mr. Driscoll!" he said provokingly. "It has never been your privilege to thrash Mike Maverick yet that I am aware of."

"Mebbe ye think I can't do it?" Driscoll snarled.

"If I were to express my opinion candidly, it would likely surprise you!" Mike smiled, tantalizingly. "Let me tell you, Bob Driscoll, that I don't fear you at all, and though you have used every means to spoil the success of my adventures heretofore, I accredit it to the fact that you are a rough, ignorant lout, jealous of every one's superior accomplishments, and malignant toward those who are better than you, because you are too mean a sneak and loafer to help yourself out of the unenviable sphere you occupy!"

With a vengeful fervor did Mike utter these words; he meant every word to count, and it did.

Driscoll's brow grew, literally, as black as a thundercloud and he doubled up his fists threateningly.

"I'll larn ye to bla'guard me, ye low-lived Bowery bum!" he cried. "I'll sp'ile some o' your fine feathers, now that I've a chance."

"That's right. Pitch in, boys! The feller that licks is the feller I want!" Peleg Prancer declared, getting near the door, either with a view of shutting off the chance for either of the men to escape, or else taking the position with a view of escaping, should an assault be made upon him.

Driscoll, uttering no reply, rushed fiercely at the Bowery boy, intent upon knocking him out, in short order; but Mike was not knocked out by any means. His black eyes were fixed upon the rival detective, and as he rushed forward the young blood leaped lightly to one side, and adroitly tripped the bully.

Down, with a crash that jarred the floor, went Driscoll, striking fairly upon his face, and causing a jet of claret to spurt from his nostrils.

A low laugh escaped the Bowery boy.

Quickly regaining his feet, with an infuriated cry, Driscoll once more sprung toward his adversary.

Then there followed an exchange of rapid blows, and violent curses on the part of Bob.

One terrific blow caught him on the right eye, another on the left, a third upon his bleeding nose, at which he fell, and did not rise; he was undisputably "knocked out."

Mike did not show the result of a blow or a scratch.

"When the bums begin to drap,
And good b'hoys begin to scrap—"

he sung, turning to Peleg Prancer, with a wink.

"Ef ye don't b'lieve it, jest drop down in the Bowery some night, and I'll show ye how we train fleas down there. Have the kindness to step one side, Mr. Prancer. I will bid you good-eve."

"What! ain't ye goin' ter undertake the job?" Prancer demanded.

"Not muchly, old gristmill! Ye deceived me by havin' an eavesdropper, and I don't have no split ticket when I vote. Mebbe I'll look up the case, but if I do I'll look deeper into it. You hire Driscoll fer two hundred. I'll work fer nothin'."

"What d'ye mean?"

"I mean thet I don't take five cents' worth o' watered stock in you, sir, and I ain't hitchin' on. In my private opinion, publicly expressed, you're a first-class fraud!"

And brushing past the Vermonter Mike left the room.

CHAPTER III.

NORA AND HER MISSION.

MIKE went direct from the Hotel Devonshire to his lodgings, in a Hester street tenement, near the Bowery.

He had one apartment here, on the third flight, which, though by no means first-class, was comfortably furnished with a bed, chairs, table, and warmed by a grate fire.

The walls were covered with lithographs of various celebrities; and here and there were odd little articles, peculiar to the tastes of the city Bohemian.

Producing his pipe the young detective turned on the gas, and seated himself at the table. A thoughtful expression was upon his face as he sent up columns of smoke.

"I've lost the job!" he soliloquized, "but I ain't certain that I'm sorry about it. I didn't quite catch as lively an interest in it as I might, ef any one but that Peleg Prancer had been connected with it. It is evident that he wants the girl bad. He wants Ned Shields not quite so bad, and he wants that box of papers a good deal more than either girl or man."

His reverie was interrupted by a rap on the door, to which he called out:

"Who's there?"

In the particular neighborhood where his lodgings were located, society was not exactly established on a Christian footing, and it was but prudence to be careful. The denizens of the vicinity were not noted for good character or respect for the law.

"It's only me, Mike. Can I come in?" a girlish voice cried.

"Certainly. Come in, Nora. Your rap sounded unfamiliar!" Mike responded, heartily.

The door had opened, and a girl entered the room—one, too, whose appearance was somewhat a contrast with that of the well-dressed Bowery Blood.

She was about sixteen years of age, of graceful figure, yet evidently she had always been accustomed to hard work.

She was rather shabbily clad, showing that poverty was no stranger to her.

Yet, beneath her well-worn hat was a pretty, piquant face, with a perfect mouth, attractive

blue eyes, and a fair forehead, fringed with charming shingled "bangs" of brown color.

A gleam of pleasure shot athwart Mike's features at sight of her.

"Well, Nora, how did peanuts and candy and fruits sell to-day?" he asked, pushing her forward a chair.

"Not very well, Mike!" and a serious expression crossed her face. "There's an Italian woman set up shop on the opposite corner, and she's stolen away a good deal of my trade. She's got a bigger stock than me, too. But I'll snap my fingers at her to-morrow, Mike. I've shet up shop!"

"Shet up shop? Why, what are you talking about, Nora?"

Mike knew that she was a waif and an orphan, alone in the world, with no one to love or care for her—except it was himself—and with no means of support, except what little she could make out of a corner fruit and candy stand, on the Bowery—barely enough it was to get her the most frugal necessities of life.

"Yes, Mike, I've sold out, an' shet up shop!"

"But I don't understand you. What in the world are you going to do without your business?"

"Why, would you believe it, I've got a splendid situation, Mike, as clerk up at Macy's on Sixth avenue. Jest think of it! I get five dollars a week, and can wear good clothes!"

Mike smiled. The idea of wearing good clothes and living on five dollars a week was something beyond his comprehension.

"I'd like to know how you got a situation there," he said, incredulously.

"Well, a nice-dressed gentleman came along, and the crowd jostled a bundle he carried into the gutter. I picked it up and wrapped it in another paper, and he thanked me awful nice. Pretty soon he came and bought some nuts, and asked me if I wouldn't like a better job. He told me he could get me one, no doubt—so I said yes. He went away again, and came back about dark, and said he was interested in me, and had obtained me a situation at Macy's. He said that I was to report to-morrow morning, with better clothes. So I just sold out the stand to Mom Maguire, and I'm going to Macy's."

The expression on the young detective's face showed that he did not approve of the change.

"What was this fellow's name?" he asked, "and what for looking man is he?"

"Oh! he's just scrumptious—and he said his name was Tracy Travis. Ain't that a nice name? Oh! he's a daisy, Mike—nice-formed, well-dressed, and good-looking in face, with a black mustache, black eyes, and black hair. Oh! I tell you he's a real nabob!"

"Undoubtedly!" Mike assented, dryly—"one of the sort of nabobs who have naught to do but fasten their evil gaze upon every pretty girlish face they see. You take my advice, Nora—look out for Mr. Tracy Travis, and don't let him ensnare you! Go to Macy's, if you like, but have nothing further to do with the fellow. I'll wager a new dicer he don't mean you any good."

Nora's face flushed, and a grateful expression passed over it.

"You bet I'll take care of myself, Mike. I've

not been on the streets all these years without learnin' how to do that. I am much obliged for your kind advice, Mike. You were ever good to me."

"I always took an interest in your welfare, Nora, because you had no one else to do so."

"And, Mike, I've got something else to tell you. I've had another adventure."

"So? Well, let's hear it!"

"Oh! it's funny. A man stopped at my stand just as I was about leaving it, and asked me if I knew of a smart, keen-witted youth of honesty and integrity, who was well posted about the city?"

"Indeed?"

"Yes, and I axed him what he wanted of sech a boy, and he said that he was hunting for a person, and wanted to hire a shrewd, wide-awake young man in preference to employing a detective."

Mike had become deeply interested.

"Well, what did you tell him, Nora?"

"Why, what d'ye suppose I told him?—that I didn't know of any? You bet I didn't. I just told him about you, and told him you'd fill the bill, and he said he thought you would, and fer you to meet him at the Astor House in the morning at nine."

"What's his name?"

"David Dore."

"Front door, or back door?"

"I don't know about that, but I should 'spect back-door, as he's from the backwoods—way up in Vermont!"

"Ha! you don't tell me?"

"That's what he said."

"Did he mention what kind of a person he was in search of?"

"No, not's I know of, 'cept it was a girl."

Mike dashed the ashes out of his pipe so vehemently that he broke the clay stem in to a dozen pieces.

"Why, what's the matter?" Nora asked excitedly.

"Nothing! nothing!" he replied excitedly, "only I've got a case which is worthy of my steel. Oh! I'll work it up!"

Mike was one of the gay birds of the Bowery, whom sleep seldom troubled. If ever he did indulge in that luxury, it was generally in the daytime; for every night saw him roaming about the city, in the sections where the most excitement prevailed.

It was his custom to make a midnight tour of the down-town police stations, and examine the registers, in which way he was able to keep himself pretty well posted as to doings in criminal circles.

He also frequently posted himself as to the arrivals at the various first and second-class hotels, and picked up such news everywhere as might prove of interest to him in his professional calling.

After Nora's departure, although it was near midnight, he sallied forth from his lodgings and made his way upon the Bowery, where the crowd was but little less dense than earlier in the evening.

Great volumes of humanity pulsed along in either direction without seeming to have any particular aim, except to move on—on—on.

Mike was familiar with the location of nearly every den of sin and vice in that section of the city, but it was not because he was a frequenter of these dens except in pursuance of the interests of his profession, or, in other words, to find some one whom justice "wanted."

Although of a rather wild and reckless disposition, he was not the young man to be led away by any one of the various phases of vice with which he came in contact, from which fact he commanded a certain degree of respect from the rough class with whom he occasionally mingled.

Of all the resorts that he was familiar with he knew of but one where he could get what he would probably need.

This was an up-stairs poker-room, run by a native Vermonter, named Jim Luce.

Luce was a wideawake man of the world, a thorough-bred sharp, and yet a perfect gentleman, with many good qualities not to be found in the average gambler.

He liked books and purchased them. He ran a quiet poker game, and sometimes dealt in a brace at faro; but every one voted him as square as a cube.

Through saving him from falling into the river, at a Jersey City ferry-slip, Mike had come to know him, and the two had since been on very friendly terms.

Remembering that Luce had a Vermont Directory, Mike made his way to the resort, which was located over a clothing store, on the east side of the Bowery, below Prince street.

Understanding the signal, he gave several peculiar raps upon the door, and was admitted.

The room was not very large, but contained a bar and a number of tables and chairs, and the windows were closely curtained, lamps diffusing all the light permitted.

The tables were surrounded by players, most of whom were well-dressed men, who looked as though they might possess some means to gamble on.

Mike gave them but an idle glance, for they were but types of a thousand and one similar gatherings he had seen, in different places of the kind.

Jim Luce was lounging behind the bar, enjoying a cigar, and nodded as Mike approached him.

"Howdy, Mike! What's the word?" the gambler saluted—a large, powerfully wrought fellow, he was, with sandy beard and keen gray eyes.

"Oh! things still move," Mike replied, good-naturedly. "My business is a little dull, however, and I thought I'd come up and 'pull' your place and make a spec, you see."

Luce looked serious.

"Ye know I've had a notion you would be doing something like that, one of these times!" he said, earnestly.

Mike laughed.

"If I was in that line of business there's plenty I'd single out before I'd tackle you," he said.

"By the way, I've another mission to-night, Luce."

"What is it?"

"You have a State Business Directory of Vermont?"

"No. I have, however, one of each county, in separate volumes."

"That, perhaps, will do as well. I want to find a town, village, or hamlet, known as Porcupine Corners."

Luce looked at the Bowery Detective rather quizzically.

"Porcupine Corners?" he echoed. "Why, what in the world is the matter with you? There isn't such a place in all Vermont, I'll take an oath."

"Are you sure?"

"I am. Here is a set of volumes, giving every postal address, town and hamlet, in the old 'fine wool' State, and if you will find Porcupine Corners there, I'll treat."

Mike examined the books. Each volume represented a county of the State, with the population of each village, town or precinct.

He ran over these directions with a critical glance, while Luce watched him, with a strangely inquisitive expression.

List after list of names the Bowery Detective scanned, but no expression of his hawkish features told that he had found the place he sought for.

He finally closed the books, and stacked them up on the bar.

"No Porcupine Corners there, I am sure!" he said. "That settles one point in my mind. That son-of-a-gun of a Yankee is a fraud. Are you sure, Luce, that there isn't some little country gathering of houses by that name?"

"If there is, boy, it has recently sprung into existence. I have traveled over nearly every foot of ground in Vermont, before I came here, two years ago, but I'll take an oath I never heard of Porcupine Corners before."

"Did ye ever know of such a man as Peleg Prancer?" he demanded.

"No. That's a make-up name, sure. What are you trying to follow, Mike—a false trail, or are you overloaded?"

"Nothing of the latter!" the Bowery boy replied, positively. "I had a pretty good jag on board, the early part of the evening, but I struck a scent, and I'm smelling it up, with clear nostrils."

"What's the racket?"

"I'd tell you, Jim, as quick as any one, but this is a case I've got to work up, on its merits, and be rewarded, accordingly. It isn't a snap, by any means, and for a time I've got to go it blind, and sift every speck carefully."

"All right, Mike, I approve of your spunk. There's nothing like chasing the game close, whether you win or lose."

"Right you be. But, Jim—"

"Hold up a bit. D'ye see that fellow yonder, at the back of the table? He's had devilish poor luck, and the 'timers' are working him for all there's in him!"

"Never mind him!" Mike said, calmly, without taking his eyes off from the Yankee gambler's face. "I am not interested in the fortunes and misfortunes of cards just at the present moment. I have come to the conclusion that you can give me a little information on a matter of importance."

Luce eyed him sharply.

"What d'ye mean?" he demanded.

"Nothing much. I merely want to ask you—do you, or did you ever, know a man by the name of David Dore?"

The rapid, uninterpretable expression that shot athwart the poker-man's countenance proved that the name was familiar to him.

And, with his lynx-like eyes, Mike took note of the fact.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE SCENT.

"You knew David Dore—you do know him! he exclaimed in an undertone. "Let me know where he lives."

"What d'ye want to know?" Luce growled, all of the habitual pleasant composure gone out of his face, leaving a hard, cold expression there.

"What d'ye want to know about David Dore?"

"Simply his address, Jim. I see that in connection with the name you have some secret you would not willingly disclose. Give me the man's address, and I will ask you no more, at present!"

A grim, threatening glitter entered the eyes of the gambler.

"Are ye working against me?" he demanded, fiercely, bending over the bar.

"No, Luce, I am not. Only for an intuition, caused, perhaps, by knowing that you were a Vermonter, I should not have suspected that you were ever acquainted with the name of Dore!"

The gambler did not appear entirely satisfied. He knew that Mike was literally as keen as steel, and he eyed him, doubtfully, for several seconds.

"Give me an insight into why you want to know anything about David Dore?" he said, shrewdly.

"Nary an *in*!" Mike decided. "The case is mine, not yours, and if I can make anything out of it, why shouldn't I? So far as I know, now, you will not be interested in it, whatever your past may have been!"

"But why do you seek information of David Dore?"

"That I cannot tell you, until I work up the case."

"You're a shrewd one. You must have some urgent reason for wanting to know about him. Last I knew of him, he lived up near Grafton, in Vermont."

"Are you well acquainted with the people of that immediate section?"

"I was, a few years ago."

"You're sure, then, that you never heard of such a man, there, as Peleg Prancer?"

"Positive of it."

"I am much obliged to you for your information. How large a family did Dore have?"

"One child—a daughter."

"Correct. Did you ever know that he had a son?"

"I've an idea he did, once, but believe he died, some years ago."

"Well, I guess that is all I need to know just at once. Give me a cigar and I'll take a skip. Join me?"

And he threw down some change, and selected one of the cigars handed him,

"Now, then, what about the fellow, you spoke about getting fleeced?"

"Ah! yes—the one at the back of the table, yonder. He's as reckless as blazes, or he'd plainly see he's getting swamped. Some fellers don't seem to care, whether they lose money, or not."

Mike took a careless glance at the person indicated by the gambler—then, he gave a perceptible start.

What strange fatality was this?

The reckless young man was a decided counterpart, in face and general appearance, to the photograph the young detective had received from Peleg Prancer!

There could be no mistake, in this respect; the features, the eyes, and their expression, were the same as in the photograph.

The young man had plainly been upon a protracted spree, for both his face and eyes were red from the effects of drink, and his whole appearance spoke of a reckless regard for himself, such as is peculiar to the average hard drinker.

If this was Ned Shields, he was certainly in bad luck, and did not appear to care whether he lost or won.

Mike eyed him, attentively, and finally saw him draw a purse from his pocket, and extract a single new crisp note.

"It's all I have left," he said, "and if I lose it, I'm broke. I'll go it, however, that my hand goes out!"

The gamblers about the table exchanged lightning glances; then, one of their number said:

"I'll just have to take you on that, my friend; pat up!"

The money was staked, and the gambler laid down his hand in triumph.

He held everything, nearly, worth holding in the game.

Shields threw down his cards with a curse, and arose from the table.

"Cleaned out!" he cried, grimly. "Served me right for being fool enough to play with a pack of sharpers!"

"See here!" the winner of the last stake cried, springing to his feet; "we don't want no insinuations, my friend. Any one as dares intimate we don't do the square thing, generally goes off with a cracked skull."

"Indeed?" Shields retorted, evidently in no wise alarmed at the other's frightening aspect. "I presume likely the skulls of your previous cracking were somewhat softer than you'd find mine. As for your square playing, allow me to inform you that I am perfectly well aware that the whole gang of you played as much as possible into each other's hands."

"You are a liar!" the gambler declared, fiercely.

"You're another!" Shields retorted, coolly, his penetrating eyes flashing brilliantly.

The gambler, whose name was Burke Brennan, uttered a fearful oath, and bounded forward. His onslaught appeared savage enough to carry a larger man than young Shields from his feet. But the young man did not stir out of his tracks.

He waited until the proper opportunity ar-

rived, then his fist shot out with sudden velocity and caught the gambler between the eyes, laying him back senseless upon the floor.

With revengeful cries, the other card sharps rushed toward the young stranger, but they paused when Jim Luce stepped from behind the bar and confronted them with a pair of six-shooters, one in either hand.

"Back!" he ordered, sternly. "None of this sort of thing in my place. If you want to fight, go charter a tug and go down the river."

"We'll punch the head off'm the dirty bla'guard!" one of the sharps declared, savagely.

"No, you won't—not here!" Luce assured, positively. "You've got his money, and that's enough. Young man, you git out now, and I'll see that these fellows don't harm you."

"I'm not afraid of the whole gang!" Shields declared pluckily.

"Maybe not. You go, however; I don't want any further fuss."

"Very well; to accommodate you, I will go. But recollect, it's not because I wouldn't like to lay 'em all out, like I did that one sucker!"

And shaking his fist at them, he left the room. They would have followed, but Luce's warning shake of the head admonished them that it would not be a healthy undertaking.

Mike also quitted the poker-room, and descended to the street. He meant, if possible, to keep track of the young Vermonter, if it were indeed he.

Not that it was his present intention to arrest him, for he had little faith in what he had learned from Peleg Prancer. Young Shields might be a culprit, but Mike was not quite satisfied that it was any of Prancer's business whether he was or not.

Shields was already a considerable distance away when Mike reached the street, and was hurrying along rapidly down the Bowery.

Striking into a brisk gait, Mike took the opposite side of the street and followed. He hoped, by keeping Shields in sight, to learn where he lodged, and thus, perhaps, the whereabouts of the missing Gracie Prancer would be cleared up.

Unaware that he was followed, the object of the young detective's search kept on steadily, without once looking back; and Mike pursued as perseveringly, without once losing sight of his man.

Through the Bowery continued the chase, into Park Row; thence to Broadway, to Cortlandt street, and through the latter street to the ferry-house.

"He's going to Jersey City," Mike concluded, "and like enough is going to take the Pennsylvania Railroad, to some other point. I'll find out, anyhow."

Shields entered the ferry-house.

Mike remained in the rear. He saw Shields purchase only a ferry-ticket. He did not approach the railway ticket window, but passed on into the inner ferry-room.

Mike then entered, purchased a ticket, and waited in the first apartment until the clang of the bell announced the arrival of the boat.

He then entered the waiting-room and mingled with the crowd, taking good care to keep out of the sight of the young Vermonter.

When the gate opened, there was a general rush on board the boat, and the detective succeeded in getting aboard without being spied by Shields.

As usual, when the boat steamed out from her slip, what passengers were not in the cabins were on the front end of the boat—with one exception.

Ned Shields remained at the rear end, looking off into the water as if it had a peculiar attraction to him.

The night was so densely foggy that only a few feet from the boat could the human eye reach, and a constant succession of whistles were heard from the various crafts plying upon the river—precautionary signals, whereby collisions could better be avoided.

Mike stood in the shadows of the carriage-way, watching his man like a hawk. His mind was already made up in regard to what was Shields's purpose—that his objective destination was not Jersey City, but a watery grave.

When about in mid-stream, Mike saw him raise his eyes heavenward, as if he were uttering a prayer.

With a swift and stealthy stride, the detective reached him, and firmly seized his arm just as he was about to make the fatal leap.

"I wouldn't, my friend, if I were you!" Mike said, quietly. "The fish get plenty of better bait than you, and the Morgue supplies more floaters than the hospital dissecting-rooms can use up, you can bet. So there's no room for you!"

Shields wheeled about, with an angry exclamation, and evidently recognized the Bowery Detective.

"Let go my arm!" he cried, savagely. "What d'ye mean by interfering in what don't concern you, you in—"

"Tut, tut! no back talk!" Mike interrupted. "If you don't want me to arrest you for attempted suicide, you behave yourself like a Plymouth church deacon. Here comes one of the boat-hands."

The admonition appeared to have a wonderfully soothing effect on the young man, so Mike released his grasp.

The boat-hand, in passing, eyed them sharply, but speedily returned to the front.

"Why did you interfere?" Shields demanded again, when they were alone.

"Because I don't like to see a nice fellow make a confounded idiot out of himself without cause."

"You little know what cause I've had."

"Mebbe not; again, mebbe I know considerably more about it than you think I do, Mr. Shields!"

No perceptible sign did the young man evince that he had ever heard the name before.

"I presume you've mistaken me for some other person," he said, with unruffled composure. "My name is Gresham—George Gresham."

"Oh! is it? Now, Neddy, my chum, I don't look like a greenhorn, do I?—don't look like as if I'd eat cream biscuit, and think they were plum-puddin', do I?"

"I don't understand you,"

"You do! Ye can't fool me. You take me for a regular Weehawken flat, you do."

"Nothing of the kind, sir, but I must admit that your actions are somewhat eccentric."

"Oh! you're a good 'un, you are! But, Neddy, it won't wash. You're Edward Shields, of Grafton, Vermont, or thereabouts, an' there's no sort of use of your trying to deny it!"

The would be suicide uttered a metallic sort of laugh, but that strengthened Mike's convictions.

"I am sorry I cannot agree with you, my friend. You are either laboring under an attack of dementia, or else are outrageously mistaken. George Gresham is my name, and don't you forget that."

"Oh! well, if that's the case, I'm on the wrong track," Mike said, apologetically.

"Nothing more positive," Gresham assured. "Ah! here we are at the ferry slip. And I am still alive. I hardly know whether to thank you or not?"

"Oh! suit yourself about that. If you contemplate attempting suicide again, I hope you will first recollect that Gracie is here in the city, looking for you!"

"The devil, you say—"

He suddenly checked himself, and looked confused.

Mike laughed triumphantly.

"Now, there! I thought I'd trip you, Neddy dear, though you were ever so careful, you know!"

"Confound you! What do you know about her?" the young man demanded, frowning fiercely. "Out with it, or I'll throw you overboard!"

"Oh, don't be so awesome! You don't make even a two-cent shiver run down my spine, and don't forget that. If you want to know anything about your darling Gracie, all you've got to do is to go back to New York with me, unbosom yourself, and we'll compare notes. Come! let's get off! No, stay here. We will go back on this boat!"

"What! without paying fare?"

"Cert. Live in New York as long as I have, and you'll catch onto the ropes, I'll guarantee."

"Who are you?"

"Mike, the Bowery Detective, and as gallus a b'boy as you often pick up. In other words, more to the point, I'm a detective."

An assurance which did not seem to favorably impress the Vermonter.

"What d'you think you're going to make by dogging me?" he growled, his former fierceness returning.

"That isn't decided yet, I believe!" Mike replied, composedly. "It altogether depends on how you pan out, my friend. If you balance the scales, at good honest weight, all may be right. If there's too much alloy and a lacking of good coin, things may be different."

Gresham, or Shields which ever he was, uttered another of his metallic laughs.

"There's one thing you'll find I'm not lacking in!" he hissed, as with lightning like agility the "wanted" man sprung upon the Bowery boy, and lifting him bodily in the air, as though he had been an infant, flung him overboard, in

the path of the boat, which was beginning to move out from her pier, into the stream.

There was no cry; simply a splash; then Gresham darted back into the carriage-way, in the nick of time to escape being seen by several passengers, who came out from the cabin, to the fore part of the boat.

Gresham joined them directly. He was pale, but otherwise strangely composed.

The boat was already passing over the spot where Mike had struck the water.

A hundred chances to one, he had been drawn in under the wheels, and crushed to death.

"Oh! they'll bound me, will they?" the Vermonter muttered under his breath. "More than one, then, shall pay a hard penalty for his folly. New York is a big place to find a man in!"

CHAPTER V.

MIKE'S NEW TRAIL.

MIKE, through the experiences of an eventful career, had learned one valuable lesson, and practically perfected himself in it—that was, in a time of emergency, to think and act with rapidity.

Therefore, when he found himself going down into the river, he knew his danger was imminent—not particularly because he could not swim, for there were few better men-fish than he in the city; but he was aware that unless he got out of the slip in an incredibly short space of time, he would be run down by the New Brunswick, which was the name of the huge craft from which he had been hurled.

The distance to where he could round the piles and get out of the path of the boat was not great to the eye; yet to swim it would require some lively work, as the great wheels of the boat were already beginning to churn the water into a foaming vortex.

"Sink or swim!" came to Mike's mind, and he struck out manfully.

Never before did he put forth as much exertion as now.

On—on! his head making but a tiny speck in the dark water, and the great monster sweeping after him, as if eager to ride him down. He could see the passengers at the front of the boat, but they saw him not. To be sure, a cry for help might have attracted attention, but it is doubtful if it would have done any good, as the boat could not have been instantly stopped.

On—on! He felt a terrible suction of water tugging at him, as if to pull him backward, in under the wheels. The broad prow of the boat was hovering close over him.

"My God! I'm lost!" he thought.

No! he would make a superhuman effort!

He did! He reached the end of the piling on the right hand of the crib, and whirled partly around it. He could go no further, for the other boat loomed up, speeding into the next slip.

All he could do was to throw his arms about the outer pile, and cling to it, and this he did with desperate strength.

It was his salvation.

When the New Brunswick was out of the slip he swam across and still further on down—

stream, and soon struck the docking a few rods below the ferry-house.

Knowing well he would attract attention if he attempted to cross on the ferry again, he was at a loss what to do, after clambering out of the water, but finally, seeing no other plan to pursue, he bolted into the ferry-house, purchased his ticket, and got aboard the next boat.

Several curious ones asked him how he got wet, but in each case he answered them evasively, so that they got no satisfaction.

On reaching the New York side he made his way, by unfrequented streets, to his lodgings in Hester street.

The next morning he was abroad bright and early, and looked none the worse for his ducking the previous night. He had been baffled, seemingly, at the beginning of the case; but the fact only nerved him to a greater resolution, to assiduously stick to the trail until he had unraveled the mystery.

And yet he could see no clear way ahead, and he was pretty well satisfied that he had tackled a harder job than any other he had ever undertaken. He knew, however, that many a detective had worked himself up to fame and fortune by following the merest shadow of a clew; why could he not do the same?

To be sure, he had no present surety of getting paid, or even of being thanked, for his efforts, but he knew he had sufficient money to carry him through for awhile, and by the time it was exhausted, something, "Micawber"-like, might turn up. If not, it would not be the first time in his experience that he had been reduced in his finances to a single cent.

This cent—an ancient-dated, old-fashioned copper—he had worn, suspended to a small-linked gold chain, about his neck, ever since he could remember. He would not part with it for love or money;—it was his talisman! That there was any special significance in its possession he was unable to say, as he had never known his parents—his earliest recollection dating back to a period when he was a tiny street waif, supporting himself by selling newspapers.

In the case now before him, he was fully determined to leave no stone unturned, until he had sifted out all that was possible to learn of old Peleg's game, of Miss Gracie's history, and Ned Shields's roguery.

Bright and early, therefore, he sought the nearest telegraph office, and sent the following message:

"To POSTMASTER, Grafton, Vermont:—

"Does man live there named David Dore, or Peleg Prancer? Is man wanted named Edward Shields or George Gresham?

MIKE MAVERICK,
"Detective."

He then lounged about the office, until he thought an answer ought to reach him, and sure enough, he got one.

It was worded as follows:

"M. MAVERICK, Detective:—Do not know the parties named, nor of them. ———, P. M."

"Just as I thought, Mike muttered. "There's a deep-seated game here, now I know it. Mr. David Dore and Peleg Prancer are both very

mysterious gentlemen. They are both playing a game."

Remembering that he was to see David Dore at nine, he at once set out for the Astor House. If he found the gentleman, it was barely possible that he might learn something applying to the case, even if it were but little.

He found Dore's name upon the register, and opposite it, "Grafton, Vermont."

His room was 56.

Mike hesitated a few minutes; then, sent up his card.

He was not positive whether he should profit by forming Mr. Dore's acquaintance or not.

The hotel boy soon returned, and Mr. Dore accompanied him.

He was a good-looking, well-preserved man of five-and-forty, robust of figure, and on the whole, rather prepossessing of appearance. He was nicely dressed, and seemed at least to be a person who was well-to-do.

He eyed the Bowery Detective sharply, as he approached, as if "sizing" him up.

"You wished to see me?" he interrogated, in a pleasant tone.

"Yes, sir—that is, if you are Mr. David Dore?"

"That is my name, sir. What can I do for you, may I ask?"

"I called to see you in reference to your want of a young man—"

"Ah, yes! yes! I see. The fruit girl recommended you. Come into the reading-room."

They were soon seated opposite each other, with a table between them, and Dore produced some fragrant cigars.

"I was expecting you," he said, by way of breaking a momentary silence, during which he had regarded Mike intently. "I suppose you think you are competent to fill the bill?"

"Judging from what Nora told me, I presume very likely I can suit you. I don't often go to sleep over a job."

"That's what I like to hear. When I employ a person I expect him to be wide-awake. Have you ever done detective work?"

"On a small scale. What is the nature of your case?" and with a professional air, Mike took a note-book and pencil from his pocket, and made ready to jot down any notes he thought worth while.

"My case can be summed up in a few words—a girl missing."

"Yes? The name, please—"

"Dora G. Dore."

"Your daughter?"

"Yes—that is, my adopted daughter."

"For how long has she been your adopted daughter?"

"Since infancy. I took her from a foundling asylum, in Boston, sixteen years ago."

"Her age consequently is—"

"A little over seventeen."

"How long has she been missing?"

"Two weeks, to-day."

"What are the circumstances of her flight—as I infer that she fled from your home?"

"She did, and very suddenly at that. She stole away in the dead of night and when we discovered her flight no trace whatever could be found of her."

"Did she leave nothing behind relating to the cause of her flight? Was she content with her home and surroundings?"

"Perfectly so. The only clew she left behind was this note."

He handed Mike a half-sheet of note-paper, upon which was written the following, in a good hand:

"DEAR PAPA:—By the time this is found I shall be far away. Why I am going, I cannot explain to you, and you will never know. Do not seek to know or to find me, for it will be useless. DORA."

The chirography was alike to that in the letter Mike had received from Peleg Prancer! There could be little doubt but what one person had written both letters.

Mike was puzzled, and knew his face betrayed the fact, but Mr. Dore evidently did not take notice of it.

"Let me see. You live at Grafton, Vermont, I believe?" Mike proceeded.

"I do, sir."

"And your adopted daughter fled from there?"

"She did."

"What business are you engaged in, Mr. Dore?"

"I am a farmer, but on rather a retired scale, however."

"That is to say, you have a plenty of this world's goods?"

"Certainly. But this does not touch upon the case."

"Perhaps not. We detectives have a great habit of asking questions, you know. Did your daughter move in society, or have any particular gentlemen friends?"

"None. She was always at home."

"What were your relations to her—fatherly, or loverly?"

"Well, of late years, I have grown to look forward to a day when I could make her my wife."

"Did she know this?"

"Yes. I think she favored my suit—or would have done so had I made a formal declaration."

"Do you know who were the parents of the girl?"

"I do not. She had been taken in by the Institution as a nameless waif."

"Have you any idea where she went to?"

"In my opinion she came here. She was very ambitious to work, although I always kept her well supplied with money, and I once heard her say that she would like to work in one of the great stores in this city."

The Bowery Detective took a note of this.

"Have you a picture of her?" he asked.

"Yes, here it is. She is a very pretty girl."

Mike nodded, as he gazed at the photograph. In his pocket he carried a duplicate of it.

"A face that, once seen, could not easily be forgotten!" he said. "Are you aware, Mr. Dore, of having any enemies who could have any object in abducting her?"

"No, indeed! I don't know that I have a foe on the face of the earth."

Mike was silent a few moments, glancing over his notes and thinking.

"Well, Mr. Dore, I suppose you want to find this girl?"

"I do, indeed. If I succeed in doing so, it will be the realization of one of my fondest hopes."

"I suppose you must have some ulterior object—something more than your actual interest in the girl. That alone could hardly tempt you to follow her up, especially when her flight proved that she cared nothing for you?"

"You misconstrue my motives. I want to save the poor child from a life of drudgery, perhaps of temptation and sin. Besides she took with her some papers that are of great value to me."

"Ah! what were they?"

"Merely papers of personal importance to me, but in no way touching upon the matter of the girl. Why she should have taken them I cannot understand."

"Well, Mr. Dore, do you want me to take hold of the case?"

"I do, yes. If you find Dora for me you shall be well rewarded."

Mike uttered a peculiar laugh.

"I dare say you won't find any New York detectives who will do your job and depend on their success for their pay. At least I shall want a liberal sum down before I can undertake it."

"How much?"

"Not less than a couple of hundred dollars, which I need for incidental expenses."

"Very well; you shall have it. When will you set to work at the case?"

"That depends upon circumstances. I shall first require to know who you are, sir, and where you reside."

Dore started violently.

"What do you mean?" he demanded, angrily, his face flushing.

"I mean that, did I know where to find the girl this minute, I should not turn her over to you until I had some proof of who and what you are, as a guarantee of good faith."

"You are insulting, young man! Have I not already told you about myself?"

"You have told me a falsehood!" Mike returned promptly and fearlessly.

"Sir!"

"Oh, don't look as if you could bite my head off, for I ain't one of the skeery kind! You will perhaps be surprised to know that *another* party is wanting this same girl, under a different name. Believing him a schemer, I refused to have anything to do with him. When I heard about *you*, it rather struck me you might be another of the same breed; so I sent a telegram to Grafton to inquire about you and Prancer."

"Prancer?"

"Yes, Prancer. That's t'other fellow. Here is the reply I received."

David Dore took the telegram and glanced over it. His face was flushed.

"You are really too cute to live!" he uttered, grimly, when he had perused it. "It don't matter, however. I'll give you five thousand dollars cash to find me that girl, no matter who I am or where I live!"

Mike eyed the man curiously. It was evident

he missing girl was more to Dore than to Prancer, and that the former was in dead earnest.

He meant to have her if money could ascertain her whereabouts.

"I shall have to consider it," Mike returned; "I will let you know my decision some time tomorrow."

He then arose, and bowed himself out of the bogus Vermonter's presence.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "FIND."

MIKE had long wished to get on favorable terms with the chief of the detective-police of the city, but had hitherto been unable to gain anything like a friendly footing either with him or Superintendent Walling, owing to the fact that Detective Bob Driscoll was immensely popular with the police captains of the different precincts, and influenced them against the young Bowery Detective and they, in turn, gave Mike no favorable airing to the higher officers.

Despite this, however, Mike was well known to all, and made it a point to so keep himself before the officers of the several precincts that there should be no possibility of his being forgotten.

Imagine his surprise then, when, later that day, he was accosted by Superintendent Walling, as he was passing through City Hall square.

"Good-afternoon, young man. A word with you!" the dignified official said.

Mike paused, with a bow, and awaited in respectful silence.

"I hear you have been giving Driscoll a black eye!" the superintendent continued, rather severely.

"Is that so? I haven't seen him since he pitched onto me and got laid out. He was fresh enough to suppose I'd let him bully me, and got left—that's all."

"I am sorry for the trouble, and hope nothing of the sort will occur again. Driscoll is one of our shrewdest men, and we shall miss him, as he will not come out-of-doors again for several days. The blow has all upset him."

"Can't help it. Maybe he will know better than to pick me up for a fool, again. By the way, sir, I've done several little deserving jobs for the city—one or two of which, Driscoll has received the credit of doing. Don't you think I ought to have a badge, backed by a little power to act?"

There! It was out, and Mike was glad of it, no matter what answer might follow. He had long had it in mind to ask for an authorized position, and he knew if any man could get it for him, Walling could.

"It was in reference to having you work up a little matter that I accosted you. Where do you live?"

Mike gave him a card, with his address scribbled on the back of it.

"I'm usually to be found there, when I'm not roamin' about town!"

"Well, this is what I have to say: It has been brought to my notice that, despite all arrests recently made, and the absence of a certain man from the city, there is still a large

traffic being done in the sale of lottery-tickets. The mayor has, consequently, ordered that strenuous measures be taken to break up this nefarious business, and rid the city of it as quickly as possible.

"Yes, sir. How do you propose to do it, may I ask?"

"There is but one way to accomplish much—that is, to once more hunt up and arrest those dealing in the fraud. Several detectives have been detailed to look up the matter, but have thus far failed to find a case."

Mike laughed quietly.

"It isn't often a detective gives away all he knows, when a millionaire corporation keeps plenty of greenback 'soothing-syrup' afloat!" he said, dryly.

"I hardly like your insinuation, young man. So far as we are able to judge, I believe we have a special force admirable for honesty and integrity. Then, too, I find, by inquiry, that you are quite likely to be better posted in regard to lottery and policy-dealers than every Bohemian one meets."

"Perhaps I could name a few!" Mike replied.

"Why have you not reported them at headquarters, then?"

"Because, being naught but a private detective, I did not feel called upon to wage a personal war on a class of men, who, at best, are unsavory characters. But with the commission of a detective, and the pay thereof, together with the backing of the city authorities, I could put your detectives on the track of eight or nine ticket-dealers, almost within the shadow of your City Hall."

The superintendent looked incredulous.

"If you can do that, lose no time about it, young man."

"I'll tell you what I'll do: you secure me a commission as a regular, and I'll tell you the name of ten dealers and where they can be found. I will not, however, participate in their arrest, as they've pals who'd make New York too hot for me, and I can't be spared just now."

"Give me the names. Proper men shall be set to work the matter up, and if they are successful you will receive your badge and papers to-night."

Without further hesitancy Mike wrote out the names and "dens" of such lottery-agents as he knew, on a leaf of his note-book, and gave it to the superintendent, who received it with a bow, and the two parted.

The Blood realized that he was doing a perfectly proper thing, because he had long felt it to be his duty to give up the several sharpers who were swindling greenhorns out of money in more than one way than through means of the "Louisiana lottery."

Then, too, the advantage of being promoted to a "regular," with the power and pay belonging to the position, was an advantage not to be despised.

The balance of the day he spent in idling about town in a questioning mood. How to gain further clues in working up the case of the missing girl was a puzzler to him. That nothing could be elicited by bothering with either David Dore or Peleg Prancer seemed certain—yet

where could he expect to find anything to help him in any other source?

New York was a big city wherein to search for one girl, and she, too, evidently trying to lose herself from being found.

He did not desire to make an attempt at finding her in any of the stores until he was possessed of his badge, which would secure him more privileges than though he had none.

About five o'clock in the afternoon he visited his lodgings, and there found a large official-looking envelope, which contained his commission-blank and badge—the former to be executed and returned, whereupon he would be duly installed as a "regular."

As he had yet some time to spare, he placed this badge under the lapel of his vest and sallied forth. Among the places he visited were the larger dry goods and trimming establishments, and simply through possessing his badge he was able to gain access to the books containing the names of all the employees. But he failed to find either the name of Dora Dore or Gracie Prancer.

As closing time prevented a further search, he concluded that nothing more could be done until the morrow, when he must visit the establishments further down town.

Fatigued with what he had done in the way of travel during the day, he started back for his lodgings early, resolved to get a good night's rest.

Then, too, he rather expected he would receive a call from Nora. She often dropped in, for a little chat, as they had known each other since childhood.

He was passing along the Bowery, which was densely thronged, when his foot kicked something, and he perceived it was a pocket-book—one of the long, side-pocket sort.

Happening to have his handkerchief in his hand, he dextrously dropped it so it covered the wallet, and stooping, picked both up, jammed them into his pocket, and hurried on, without any one paying particular attention to him.

Within the security of his own apartment, he was soon seated, with the prize laid out before him.

"No poor man lost this!" he muttered, as he took off the rubber strap which held it shut. "There's money in here, and loads of it, too, I reckon."

The wallet contained two hundred and fifty dollars in bank-notes, of ten-dollar denominations each, and a few dollars in change. There were also a number of slips of paper, unenveloped notes, and postal cards—also a sealed, stamped letter, directed to "Stephen Dore, No. 3—120th street, city."

"By Jehosaphat Johnson! Here's another clew at last, and if I don't work something out of this, I'm a royal rhinoceros from Rantoul! Stephen Dore, hey? That sounds respectable, alongside of David, though I b'lieve David was a Bible hero—got into a lion's cage, or something of the sort. Stephen! Let me see: Stephen is rich, and married—and is goin' to die—or lost a child, years ago—or—or—hang it, I'm as deep in the mud as ever. I must examine."

He went over the other papers and postal cards carefully and considerably.

There were three postals.

One was post-marked Chicago, and addressed to "Leonard Lentonville, Post-Office, New York." It read as follows:

"LEN:—Things loom up no better. The change to there is imperative. The M— has offered big.
"LULU."

The second card was to the same address, and bore the following:

"LEN:—It is useless to delay longer. Expect and look.
"RAGGED."

The third was to "Mr. Tracy Travis, No. — 120th street, City." Post-mark, New York.

It simply said:

"Meet me at Grand Central Hotel at once.

"CAMILLE."

Mike was as acute of understanding as the ordinary young man, but he had to scratch his head reflectively over the contents of the cards, and turn to the papers for relief.

They were of no importance, with one exception, being receipts from different parties to Tracy Travis. The exception was a document couched in the following language:

"TRAVIS:—I think all is safe. I have sounded the depths, and got a general idea of what to expect. As to her, there is nothing more to report.

"DAVE."

This was all there was of importance, except that upon the lapel of the wallet-book, were the initials, "T. T."

"That means Tracy Travis," Mike commented, deliberately. "Tracy, the lad, dropped this boodle, and is no doubt even now mourning over its loss. Let me see. Tracy Travis! That is the name of the snoozer who got Nora into Macy's."

"You bet it was, Mike," a voice cried, and the door opened and Nora herself entered the room. "Ha, ha! I caught you talking to yourself again. Oh, my! where did you get that pocket-book?"

"Among the ancient Egyptian ruins," Mike replied, quickly putting it in his pocket. "Ax me no questions, me darlint, and I'll tell yez no lies."

"Avast! you pirate, you've been wrecking some ship!" cried Nora, tragically striking an attitude.

"Oh! you can bet on that!" Mike responded. "How's caliker sellin' ter-day, Nora?"

"Bully, Mike! The foreman sed I did just elegant. I got away with thirty dollars' worth of paper-cambric all in one lump. You can calculate I'm solid at Macy's, too."

"Don't be too sure, Nora."

"But I am! I sha'n't stay there long, mebbe. Mr. Travis hinted that if I wanted to we might get married pretty soon, and I could live in a brown-stone house, and have servants. Oh! you bet he's a daisy!"

"And you're a fool!" Mike declared, bluntly. "Why, you crazy girl, can't you plainly see that he is an unscrupulous villain, whose sole aim in knowing you is to entrap you?"

"Oh, no, no! He is too nice a gentleman to have any wrong intentions, Mike. He is perfectly lovely."

"You'll find your mistake when too late," Mike gritted. "If I see the snoozer, you can bet I'll spile some of his loveliness."

"If you touch him, Mike, I'll never speak to you."

"Then you won't, that's all. By the way, do you know a girl at Macy's named either Dora Dore or Gracie Prancer?"

"No; I ain't much acquainted. Only know one girl—a new-comer, like myself. The hands that have been there awhile, look down on late arrivals as if they were of no account."

"What's this one girl's name?"

"Carrie Chase."

"Belong in the city?"

"No; but she didn't tell me where she came from."

"Ah! Does this picture look like her?" and he showed her the picture he had received from Peleg Prancer.

Nora uttered a surprised exclamation.

"Why, that's Carrie, as sure as the world. Where did you get her picture?"

"Never mind where. I am working up a case in which she is concerned. She is a wanted person. You keep mum and help me. To-morrow night I want you to bring her here."

"Mebbe she won't come."

"But she will, though, if you tell her that you want her to accompany you to see a particular friend."

"Well, I'll try. When shall we come?"

"To-morrow evening at eight. Be sure to fetch her here, and I will make it worth your while."

Conversation drifted onto other topics, and a man who had been crouching in a listening attitude, in the hall, by the door, stole cautiously away.

It was Bob Driscoll, detective!

CHAPTER VII.

A REVELATION.

AFTER Nora's departure the Bowery Detective retired for the night, in order to be rested preparatory to a hard day's work on the morrow. Although he had no idea just how his case was going to end, he knew that he had struck a trail in the finding of the pocketbook, which was likely to be worth following.

There were two persons whom he must interview, besides Dora Dore, or, as she was now known, Carrie Chase. They were Stephen Dore and Tracy Travis.

Just what connection they might have with the case was not clear, but that some connection they did have, the detective was perfectly well satisfied.

After a hasty breakfast the next morning, Mike took a ride up to the Hotel Devonshire and made an inquiry after Mr. Peleg Prancer.

Mr. Prancer had taken his departure, stated the clerk; it was not known whether he had left the city or not.

"I presume not!" was Mike's decision, as he passed out of the hotel. "In fact, I hardly know what to make of Mr. Prancer. He is even more of a puzzle than Davy Dore."

Being so far up-town, he concluded to kill two birds with one stone, and call upon Stephen Dore.

On arrival at the correct address, he found there an elegant and imposing mansion, plainly the home of some man of considerable wealth.

A servant answered the bell—a real tony-looking African, who assured the caller, in the blindest of tones, that Mr. Stephen Dore did reside there, but was not in.

Mike knew it was yet early in the morning for a retired nabob to be out, but as the darky was positive about the matter, what could he do about it?

"Is Tracy Travis in?" Mike asked.

"What you want of him?" the servant demanded, bluntly.

"Look-ee here! I want to see Travis, you black skunk, and it's none of your business what for, neither! Are you going to admit me, or shall I pitch you head-over-heels out of doors?"

"Marse Travis am not in!" Pompey protested. "Haf to call, sah, some odder time."

"Julius, what's the trouble?" called a voice from inside. "If it's any one to see me, show the person in, of course."

Julius scowled, but opened the vestibule door wide enough to allow Mike to enter.

"Step right into de parlor, sah!" he said, throwing open a side door. "Find Marse Travis there, sah."

Mike obeyed.

The parlor was a magnificently furnished room, but was so darkened as to shroud all its objects in half gloom.

A young man was sitting in a luxurious easy-chair with a newspaper spread out before him, while a young woman was reclining upon a sofa, and was covered up with a rich oriental shawl, in such a way that none of her features were visible to Mike's keen gaze.

Mr. Travis was a dapper individual of decidedly "dudish" appearance, and, although he was well dressed and rather good-looking, there was an air of snobbishness about him that one would hardly fancy in a respectable business man.

He nodded, without arising, at Mike's entrance.

"Be seated, sir. Excuse our servant—I seldom am in forenoons, hence his mistake. What can I do for you, Mr. *Maverick*?"

Mike was electrified.

How came he to be known to this person, whom he could not remember of ever having seen before?

"I called on a little matter of business, sir—that is, if you *are* Mr. Travis. It seems, however, that you have an advantage over me, in previously knowing my name."

"Oh! yes. You were once pointed out to me as being a promising young detective. I, too, have heard a young friend of mine mention you."

"You refer to Nora?"

"I do."

"It is partly on her account, Mr. Travis, that I want to see you. She has been telling me of you, and having for a long time kept a friendly eye on her, I want to know what you are up to?"

Keen and to the point were the tones of the Bowery Detective, showing that he was thoroughly in earnest.

Tracy Travis's face flushed, and a hard glitter entered his eyes.

"I don't know what right you have to intrude here, sir, for the purpose of demanding to know concerning what is none of your business!" he cried hotly.

"I have the business, sir, of looking well to it that no harm comes to that orphan girl," cried Mike, sternly, "through the dishonorable intentions of one who, but for an evil purpose, would never stoop to notice her."

"You speak altogether too fast, young man. You had first better prove that my intentions are not perfectly good and honorable, before you exercise your mouth quite so freely!"

"Do you mean to say it is your intention to marry her, then?"

"If I choose to do so!"

"If you *choose* to do so, oh?"

"That's what I said, I believe. If I don't choose, I shall not. I don't know it to be a matter of compulsion either way."

"You will find out differently, perhaps, Mr. Travis. Let me give you fair warning, now. And you will do well to heed it! If ever it comes to my hearing that you have not acted honorably toward that girl, I'll have your life, if I hang for it the next instant!"

"Very dramatically delivered!" Travis sneered. "You should study up in tragedy. I suppose I may now consider our interview at an end."

"Not yet, dear Travis; I rather revel in your society. I thought I'd call and ask if *she* has arrived yet!"

"Whom do you mean—what do you mean, sir? You speak in riddles."

"Oh! I guess not. I mean your foreign friend, called 'Lulu,' 'Ragged,' 'Camillo' and so forth!"

Travis uttered an oath.

"By Heaven! you have found my pocket-book, haven't you?" he gasped.

"I don't know. Is your name Leonard Lentonville?"

"No, it is not. There were articles to such an address in my pocketbook, however."

"What were they doing there? That is emphatically what I want to know."

"It is emphatically none of your business."

"Then, if that's the case, you'll get no pocket-book. You see, my dear Travis, the fact of the matter is, you are liable to get yourself into a peculiarly unenviable box if you don't go smooth!"

"Do you think so? I am surprised to hear it. Could you enlighten me as to your meaning once more?"

"If it will oblige you, I can possibly give you an eye-opener!"

"Do so. My curiosity is great!"

Travis was provokingly cool. Mike could have choked him with a good will.

"Well, I wished to know how the thing was working," Mike returned, as if he fully understood the subject he was talking on, "so I paid a visit to Prancer after his arrival here, and one to David. They were both anxious to get the girl, but were not up to the requirements with collat'. Therefore, I couldn't do anything for 'em!"

Travis ground out a dry cough, and eyed his visitor sullenly—viciously.

"I see plainly that you're considerably in the dark," he observed. "If you've undertaken to stick your nose into a furnace, don't blame any one but yourself if it gets singed off."

"Oh, certainly not! I rather despaired of working out the biz, on the slender thread I had first, but I feel considerably assured to-day. After an interview with Mr. Stephen Dore, I presume there will be less of a mystery for me to work up than now!"

"You had better not fool around Mr. Stephen Dore, or you'll get hurt!" Travis advised, savagely. "Furthermore, I presume you'll learn that you've been rubbing against the wrong porcupine, ere long."

"If I do, I sha'n't have to visit Porcupino Corners!" Mike laughed, arising. "I'll bid you good-day, sir. Bear in mind my warning about Nora!"

"Your warning, as you call it, will not have a passing consideration," Travis replied. "So there will be no further possible reason why you should call here again!"

Mike did not reply, but quitted the house, and returned down-town, feeling that he had derived little satisfaction from his morning's performances.

He had little idea that he was followed, until he entered a concert garden, near Union Square, for the purpose of seeing who might be lounging there.

After purchasing a cigar, and taking a look around, he was about leaving, when he felt a tap on the shoulder, and saw to his astonishment, that he was confronted by Julius, the waiting servant of the Dore mansion.

"Why, hello, stove-black—what are you doing here, I should like to ask?" Mike demanded.

"I was sent after you!" the darky replied.

"Do young missus wish to see you?"

"Do young missus, eh? Who's that?"

"Missy Ada, sah—de Missy Ada."

"You mean David Dore's daughter, or Stephen's Julius?"

"Marse Stephen's, sah. She wants to see you."

"Where is she?"

"She waits in de hack, sah, outside. You git in, sah, an' she explain, while you ride toward Central Park."

"I wonder if this is a trap?" Mike mused, eying the negro suspiciously. "I'll look in the carriage, before I get in, I'll bet."

Aloud, he said:

"All right. Lead ahead, Josephus. I'm allus willing to accommodate the ladies, you can bet."

They left the garden.

A hack was awaiting, outside, and the windows were closely curtained.

Attached to the vehicle was a span of high-spirited horses, which were in turn managed by a negro servant, in livery.

Julius opened the door of the hack, and Mike took a sharp look inside, ere he entered.

He saw a young and beautiful girl, of seventeen or eighteen, who was richly attired, and bore every indication of being a cultured and refined person.

She smiled him a welcome, and he no longer

hesitated to take a seat beside her in the hack and they were whirled rapidly away.

"I wanted to speak with you, and I did not know of any way I could do so better than to follow, and ask you to take a drive with me!" the young lady explained. "I am Ada Dore, the daughter of Stephen Dore, whom you called to see."

"I am very much pleased to have the honor of your acquaintance!" Mike responded. "I judge you are the same young lady who was present, reclining upon the sofa, during my interview with Mr. Tracy Travis?"

"I am. He supposed I was sound asleep, as I had taken an opiate, a short time before, having been in need of quiet and rest, after a severe attack of neuralgia. As it was, I heard every word of your conversation. I then pretended to arouse, as you left the room. Tracy was deceived nicely."

"What relation does he bear to you, Miss Dore?"

"He is my betrothed husband, and is also my own cousin."

"Indeed! I presume, then, it is a sort of family match?"

"It is. You see, my father is a very rich man, and is so far along in years that he don't expect to live a great while longer. Being very fond of Tracy, it is his desire that we cousins marry, and keep the money in the family."

"Ah! yes; I see. I suppose you acquiesce, then, to his wishes?"

"I have never refused, sir, believing Tracy to be a nice, honorable man. But, since your visit to-day, I have been assailed by fears that all is not as I have a right to hope and expect. It is on account of these feelings of uneasiness that I ordered my cab, and followed you."

"Well, I am sorry, Miss Dore, if my call this morning has alarmed or worried you. If in my power, I will try to set to rights anything I may have unwittingly said or done to offend you."

"Oh! it is not that, sir. Your conduct did not offend me—but it was some reference in your conversation, which caused me much uneasiness. Tell me, has Tracy any interest in any other girl?"

"That I could not advise you about, for anything like a certainty!" Mike answered.

"But you made mention of the names of several women—Lulu, Camille, Nora, and so forth. Who are these persons, sir?"

"Who the first two are I know not, further than that I found articles in Travis's pocket-book so signed. Nora is a personal friend of mine whom Travis has lately procured a position for in a dry goods store. She tells me he has hinted of marrying her, and of their living in a brown-stone house with servants, and so forth. Believing he meant her no good, I took advantage of an opportunity of giving him a timely warning, as you heard."

"What are you, sir?—what is your business?" Miss Dore asked.

"I am a detective."

"I thought you were, because you alluded to the clearing up of a mystery. What is it, Mr. Maverick?"

"That is more than I can tell you. It is con-

cerning a case I am endeavoring to unravel, and with which I have good reasons to believe your betrothed husband is closely connected, because of the letters I found. Do you know that your father ever had a brother, Miss Dore?"

A strange start came over the young woman.

"Oh! yes, sir. There were three brothers of them—papa, Uncle David, and Uncle Thomas!"

Mike began to feel elated.

"Are these uncles living now?"

"Only one of them—that is Uncle David. He is a very bad, wicked man."

"Would you mind giving me the family history, so far as you know it, Miss Dore?"

"Not if it will be of any use to you, sir. I don't know that I am perfectly posted on it, but I will tell it to you as I understand it."

"Do so, and I shall be ever so much obliged to you!" Mike declared.

"My father and his brothers were Virginians of poor parentage, and together with their father tilted a small plantation."

"When the gold-fever of '49 was raging, grandfather Dore went to California, and did not return for several years, when he brought back with him a fortune of two million of dollars. A few months after his return he died, and when his will was opened, it was found that he had left all his money to his elder son, my Uncle Thomas."

"As naturally was to have been expected, there was a bitter dissatisfaction on the part of my Uncle David and papa, and Uncle David, who was of a naturally rash nature, swore Thomas should never live to enjoy the undivided fortune."

"Thomas married and moved to the West, but was followed by David, and my father was afterward notified that Thomas had been killed, together with his wife and child, by David, and that the latter was a hunted outlaw in the far West for the crime."

"Thomas had made a will, which, in event of the death of his wife and child, left the fortune to my father during his life and then to his heirs immediate. My father went West, settled up the affairs, and returned here."

"My Uncle David went from bad to worse, until when last heard of he was the chief of a band of counterfeiters, and was wanted in several different States for various crimes. He has written threatening letters to papa several times, which seemed to worry him very much, but I never saw any of them, and do not know their contents."

"At last I think I see the beginning of the end!" Mike mused to himself. "It is by no means certain that there isn't work to be done, however. David Dore may not be the only black sheep in the flock I shall have to encounter."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BROTHERS' COMPACT.

THE ride continued as far as Central Park and back but Mike learned little more of importance from Miss Dore, and but little further conversation ensued relative to matters concerning the case further than that Mike

candidly expressed his deep distrust of Tracy Travis.

Miss Dore seemed much shocked at Travis's apparent faithlessness, and declared her intention of communicating her doubts to her father. But Mike advised her not to do this until he personally had a further opportunity to investigate the case, and she accordingly promised.

When they reached Union Square on their return, Mike bade her good-day, and made his way toward Macy's. Entering this emporium, he went at once up-stairs, and was not long in finding Nora's stand, where he began pricing some goods, as a pretext by which to gain time to talk with her.

"Where is Carrie Chase?" he asked, after the first greeting. "Have you spoken to her about to-night?"

"Yes. She has no objections to coming. She has been removed to one of the other rooms—I don't really know which."

"I will look about and see if I can get a glimpse of her," Mike announced.

He went from department to department of the great store and scrutinized the faces of the many pretty young sales-ladies but failed to find one answering to Dora's photograph.

Leaving Fourteenth street, he once more set out for the Bowery, where he entered the same up-stairs gaming-saloon in which he had first met George Gresham, or Ned Shields.

He was not there, however, nor had he been there, said Lucc the proprietor.

Not knowing what else to do, Mike turned his footsteps toward the Astor House, desiring to know if David Dore was yet stopping there.

If he was, it was his intention to telegraph to Chicago for an order for his arrest, as undoubtedly he was pretty well known there; but the frigid clerk informed the inquirer that David Dore had been a guest at that hostelry but one day.

Mike felt disappointed, but he based great expectations on what he might learn from pretty Dora at the forthcoming interview.

In the mean time, an interview was taking place which it becomes our duty to chronicle, as it has direct connection with the thread of our narrative.

Two men were seated at a retired dining-table in a down-town restaurant. Wine and glasses were before them, showing that they had already dispatched their meal. Both were enough alike in face, figure and general appearance to be pronounced brothers, and such they really were.

The younger of the two, was David Dore. The elder person, whose hair was more silvery, and beard heavier, was Stephen Dore, the wealthy retired merchant of 120th street.

He was a somewhat nobler-looking personage than David, but his face was now clouded and gloomy, while that of David bore unmistakable traces of triumph in its expression.

"Yes, Stephen; your fancied security is but a fancy, for, as you perceive, your affectionate brother has returned to you."

"I would to Heaven you had never lived to reach here!" Stephen Dore replied passionately.

"Why in God's name were you not content to remain where you were, and not to intrude your villainous presence where it is not wanted?"

"Oh! I've tired of being a wanderer on the face of the earth, Stephen, and want to settle down and enjoy myself. Your money-bags are sufficiently full, as I have several times written for you to open your folding-doors to me, and protect me as you would an aged father. To be sure, I haven't been really as good as a parson, since last we met so long ago; but I presume it won't matter particularly to you, since you are not the most perfect man in Christendom!"

"Were I a king among scoundrels, you are too bad to come within my notice or charity!" Stephen replied, bitterly. "You murdered my brother, and have inherited my everlasting curse!"

David uttered a sardonic laugh.

"What an idea!" he declared, without appearing to get the least ill-humored. "Why, bless your dear heart, Steve, you were just as much interested in poor Tom's taking off as I was. To be sure, I got the credit of doing the job proper, but, where did you ring in, except for the fortune, when cruel justice was doing a good bit of advertisin' for my scalp? Oh! I'm a bloody red-handed villain, Steve, but you're a cunning scamp, and my even match!"

"I am no scamp. I am an honorable gentleman," the elder brother asserted, his scowl deepening. "In what instance can you find me guilty of a disreputable act? Not a one, sir. I have always lived an upright life!"

"Oh, yes, without a doubt. How about the fortune you fetched away from that far Iowa town?"

"I was informed that Thomas was missing, together with his child; that his wife was found murdered in their cabin home; that a paper purporting to come from you stated that you had killed them all out of revenge; that my poor brother's will had been found, leaving his wealth to me. Of course I went West. I found Tom's wife dead and buried, and Tom and the child missing. Shreds of their clothing had been discovered, which confirmed their fate, even though no trace of their bodies was found. The money was handed over to me, and I came East. Now, then, what was there wicked about all that, on my part?"

"This much: you offered an extra reward for my arrest and conviction, knowing if you could get me out of the way, you would never have any trouble—your right to the money would never be disputed."

"Well?"

"Was it well? I am not so sure, old boy, that it was well for you. You knew you had a scheming brother, but you little reckoned on all there was in him. You fancied yourself safe, and to make yourself still safer, you did something very, very funny."

"I don't know what you mean, sir."

"Bah! You lie—that's one polite fact. You speculated on the money for a time, until you enriched yourself off from it—then you converted it into railroad bonds, in the name of your daughter. Very cute, wasn't it?"

"Well, I pride myself that it was a business-like move—yes."

"Exactly. If an heir to Thomas Dore's money should turn up, he, she, or whoever it might be, would have a jolly good time trying to reclaim the heritage, eh?"

Stephen Dore smiled complacently.

"Well, David, I perceive that you are not quite so dull of comprehension as I supposed you were," he said, with a chuckle of satisfaction. "I am glad you are satisfied how really absurd it would be for any person to try to wrest Tom's fortune from my Ada, now."

"I don't see it in the same light as you do!" David responded, coolly. "I may know considerably more about the matter than you imagine. For instance—that will you found was an old one, and does not hold. There was a later one—leaving everything to Tom's young daughter and his adopted son, provided they married when the girl became of age."

"Bah! you are lying!"

"Don't you wish you could bring yourself to think so? But you can't. You have always really believed that another will existed, else you would not have had a private search made when you were in Iowa."

"Pooh! you are talking to idle airs. Suppose such a thing were possible as the existence of a later will—how would it affect me?"

"In a way you little dream of. Stephen, you have, sooner or later, got to give up Tom's money, principal and interest, and don't you forget it."

"Who to, pray?—you?"

"Oh, no! I'm out of the question. I'm a wandering rogue, with a reward on my head, and due publicity might give me an undesirable vacation behind prison bars. I can, however, put you up in points, and perhaps win a sufficiency of your favor, in this way, that you wouldn't hesitate to give me a lift to a few hundreds."

"Your bright anticipations are doomed to eclipse, sir, I assure you. However, if you have anything further to communicate of interest, go ahead."

"Well, I suppose I might as well do it!" and David Dore glanced on either side to see if anyone was within ear-shot. "First, however, we had better begin somewhere near the beginning—for instance, at the time of the murder," he began.

"Go ahead!"

"Well, with revenge in my heart, I followed our brother West from Virginia. I found him located upon a new farm in Iowa, miles from any other habitation. This satisfied me that I could effect a successful consummation of my scheme. Before visiting the cabin, I got nerved up, by a plentiful supply of whisky, and then set forth. I found Tom's wife alone, at the cabin, and when she refused to give me up the money, I brained her. I had learned from her that Tom was at work, in a distant water-course, securing fire-wood. The children were visiting at a neighbor's. I left a paper, proclaiming my crime. Whisky made me glory in such an act of bravado. I then went in search of Tom. I found him, and a desperate struggle ensued. I thought I had killed him, finally, and hid the

body in a lonely swamp. I then bided my time, waylaid the children, and captured them, and bore them miles and miles from the scene of my crime. I had no intention of killing them. For years I kept them well-cared for, but really imprisoned, in a wild mountain retreat. I had no desire to slay them, for I had secured Tom's latest will from the cabin, and meant to turn it to good use, when they grew up.

"As they grew older, they came to regard me as a hated enemy, and on five or six different occasions escaped me, but by a liberal use of money, I always succeeded in recapturing them. On the last occasion, however, when they escaped they visited my own quarters, to kill me, I presume, but I was away; so they stole the tin safe, containing Tom's will, and some other papers, which will enable the girl, with her sharp wits, to pick out who and what she is, and where her fortune lies."

"And you have not found her?"

Stephen Dore uttered these words in a gasping, spasmodic sort of way.

His face was not as florid as usual, and it was plain that he began to apprehend unpleasant impending results.

"Not she has not been found. I, myself, have traced her here to New York, but there the trail ends. I have feared to employ regular detectives, as there was danger of getting the mutton into the fire. I tried to work in a shrewd young fellow, but he was too much for me. He first telegraphed and found out that I did not belong where I claimed to, and then denounced me as an impostor, and refused to work for me."

"That is strange. How came he to do this?"

"Simply from the fact that another party had previously tried to engage him to work up the same case!"

"The deuce! Who is this other party?"

"My bitterest foe, and everlasting pursuer. He is a Chicago detective, and he searches for me with a pocketful of charges, and requisitions from different States for my arrest. He is known as Peleg Prancer!"

"Ah! then he is not after the girl?"

"Ain't he? Well, I should smile, if he wasn't! Stephen, he wants the girl as bad as either of us—and for natural causes, too!"

Stephen Dore glared at his brother inquiringly.

David nodded and smiled.

"You are not slow to comprehend, no more than I am," he averred. "It is *he*, sure enough!"

"Ten thousand furies! Where is he?"

"He arrived in New York about the time I did, having come from the East, where the game was caged."

"Do you not know his present whereabouts?"

"Not to-day. I expect to soon, however. He has employed a detective named Driscoll to work for him. I have hunted Driscoll up, and bribed him to my side. He is a keen devil, and open to money. I offered him five thousand dollars to make Mr. Prancer the subject for an inquest, and another five to deliver the girl to me, together with the safe."

"Good! It is plain you have not lost all your judgment. Have you an idea where the girl is?"

"Not exactly. If Driscoll cannot find her, no one can."

"Does he suspect her actual value?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"And what do you propose to do, if she is delivered to you?"

"Simply this: make myself solid for life, by forcing you to divvy up Tom's boodle, and then hand the girl over to you, to do with as you will!"

"So! so! You are playing a cute game, ain't you? What if I refuse?"

"Then, I'll produce ample proofs of who the girl is, and she shall turn you out of doors, and I'll kill you in the bargain!"

"So you think you've got me, dead to rights, eh? What if I should raise an alarm, and give you into the custody of the police?"

David Dore laughed grimly.

"It would be the last act of your life, I warn you. I am a bad man to trifle with, as you'll find out, if you are squeamish, in the least. So you had better play safe with me, for half, than play for the whole, and lose all!"

"I am not so sure of that—yet I must have time to consider. Where is this step-son of our brother—or adopted son? I never heard of him, before."

"Didn't you? Well, he is known as Edward Shields, and was with Dora, when they escaped. The girl came here, and I dare say Shields has joined her."

Stephen Dore poured out a glass of wine, and lit a cigar.

"It is plain that we must work to save an unwelcome accident!" he said, his brows drawn into a scowl. "Therefore, I will take you into partnership, and when we are mutually satisfied that all obstacles have been positively removed, beyond peradventure, you and I will share the inheritance equally. I see no other way to prevent a disgraceful explosion."

"You have good judgment, worthy of a king!" David asserted, rubbing his hands with glee. "I will, then, in foreign climes, snap my fingers at the law that would crush me here."

"Well, let us adjourn then. When you learn more you can notify me by mail."

"Correct! But, Stephen, considering all the expense and trouble I have been to, can't you put up for Driscoll's services?"

"I have no such amount of money with me. We will meet here to-morrow, and fix the matter up."

They then arose and quitted the restaurant, not suspecting that a person had been swallowing a square meal, a few feet in the rear of where they had sat, and had, likewise, been swallowing almost every word they had uttered, for they had not spoken cautiously and he listened with intense solicitude.

This person was Mike, the Bowery Detective. He had at last "dropped" upon a windfall, having been seated there before the entrance of the Dores, as if directed by some invisible good genius.

CHAPTER IX.

DORA.

WAITING until the two Dores had fairly left the restaurant, Mike arose and followed them, at

a respectful distance, not desiring to be discovered by them.

They soon separated, however, Stephen Dore taking an up-town Elevated train, and David Dore proceeding further down town, on foot.

It was him Mike desired to trace to his lair, for knowledge of his whereabouts might prove invaluable at a later stage in the drama.

First Dore went to Broadway, and visited several steamship offices, along that busy thoroughfare.

"I smell a large-sized rat!" Mike mused as he kept in the background. "Davy the duck, proposes to get off of *terra firma*, as soon as he clinches onto the divy his brother has promised him. A cunning duffer, is Davy, and I shall have to watch out he don't get ahead of me."

After his visit to the ticket office, Dore made his way to a cheap lodging-house, on the Bowery, and disappeared therein.

Knowing the manager of the place, Mike had little difficulty in finding the location of the villain's apartment, and also learned that he had paid for the room a week in advance.

Satisfied that he needed no particular watching for the present, Mike then made his way toward his own lodgings, where he put in the balance of the day in sleep, and in figuring out the singular case with which he had been connected. Not until four o'clock in the afternoon did he again venture forth to make a tour of such resorts as he judged either Ned Shields or Peleg Prancer might frequent, but up to night-fall, he had found no trace of them.

Then he returned to his room, to await the coming of Nora and Dora Dore.

They made their appearance at the proper time, Nora ushering the pretty heiress into the young detective's presence with an air of triumph.

Miss Dore grew pale at sight of Mike, and made a movement to escape from the room, but Nora prevented, by closing and locking the door and putting the key in her pocket.

"Don't be skeart, Carrie. This is my best friend, Mr. Mike Maverick, better known as Mike the Bowery Detective. He's a perfect gentleman, and ye needn't be afeard of him."

"But you have deceived me, Nora. I supposed I was to meet one of your *lady* acquaintances."

"I didn't tell you so, did I?"

"No—but—"

"Pray be seated, Miss Dore, and have no fear of me, for you will find in me your warmest friend!" Mike said, politely.

Dora started and grew still paler, as she stared in alarm at the Bowery Detective.

She was by all odds the prettiest girl he had ever encountered, thought Mike, even though her attire was not as fine as rightfully became her station, in life.

"Sir? Why—how—!" she stammered; words refused to come to her aid, and tears sprung into her eyes.

"I pray you will be seated, dear lady," Mike urged, placing her a chair. "Instead of being lured into the trap of your enemy, as you seem to believe, you have been brought to one whose special object it is to right your wrongs. Will you not accept this brief explanation, until I can further convince you?"

She sunk reluctantly upon the seat, very little of the pallor leaving her otherwise rosy cheeks.

"You will pardon me, sir, but to me it seems incredible that you, a perfect stranger, could be my friend."

"No doubt of it, in my mind, dear Miss Dore. I am aware of many of the trials you have had to undergo, because of your uncle's villainy, but, I assure you as a friend, and as a detective, that there is an end to all things, and so there is an end to David Dore's machinations!"

"Are you a detective, sir?"

"I have the honor of being one of that craft."

"You bet, Mike's just a daisy detective!" Nora assured, proudly. "Mike and I are old chums, and I expect he will be making a detective out of me one of these days."

"Is David Dore dead, sir?" Dora asked anxiously, without noticing Nora's remark.

"No—he's just as lively as a flea, but his liveliness is going to get him into trouble, before many moons, and don't you forget it! Do you know anything with respect to your early life, Miss Dore?"

"I know that I was abducted, together with my adopted brother, and was told that my father and mother had been killed. David Dore told us this. For years he held us as captives. The reason he assigned for this was that the man who had murdered our parents was searching the world over for us, with the desire to take our lives, and it was necessary to keep us secreted in order to escape his vengeance."

"As we grew older, we grew to disbelieve, and to regard our uncle as a wicked and designing man. One night we overheard him talking in his sleep, and learned enough to cause us to believe that he was the murderer of our parents, and that we were heirs to a large fortune, left by our father, and that David Dore was withholding from us our rights, in order to perfect a pecuniary scheme of his own."

"Time and again we tried to escape our captor, but in every instance he succeeded in retaking us, and each time punished us more and more severely, until endurance ceased to be a virtue. It was useless, however, for us to seek to baffle or elude him, for he was a very demon on our trail. Our last incarceration was in a supposed private asylum run by a Doctor Santley, in New Hampshire—an asylum only in name, however, as no demented or diseased patient ever entered there, it being merely a prison for victims of evil and designing persons who were willing to pay the 'Doctor' for his accommodations and vile services."

"Yours has been a sad lot, Miss Dore. What you have told me is not new to me, although it has been known only a few hours. I heard David Dore reciting the whole remarkable story to his brother, this very afternoon."

"His brother?"

"Yes—Stephen Dore—your other uncle, who possesses all your father's wealth."

"I was not aware I had another uncle, sir!"

"Then David Dore has no doubt kept you in ignorance of the fact. Your father had two brothers. The way matters have finally been arranged between them is for the two brothers to share the wealth equally, and that you and

another are to be captured and forever put out of the way."

Dora's lip quivered.

"You do not mean to tell me, sir, that another terrible murder is contemplated?"

"Just that, Miss Dore. Were you to fall into their hands, your life would not be worth speaking for."

"Merciful Heaven! am I yet to be hunted down after my long years of suffering and suspense? I shall go mad, sir, if I have to stand the worriment much longer!"

"Do not worry in the least, dear lady. In me you have an earnest friend, who is as true as steel. Trust to me and I will bring everything to rights in due time. If you follow my directions they'll have a good time finding you. Do you possess the trunk—a small tin safe, I believe—which contains among other documents, your father's last will?"

"No, my adopted brother, Ned, took charge of that when we separated for the purpose of throwing pursuers off the track. He was to meet me, per appointment in *Herald* personals, as soon as he arrived from Boston, but he did not, and I have not heard from him since we parted."

"I rather opine he's here, though!" Mike announced. "Whatsort of a snoozer is he, anyhow?"

"Ned is a nice, kind young man—a little wild sometimes, but good-hearted and trusty. We have both been buffeted about since infancy, you know, and Ned has a violent temper, and a sort of mania—an abhorrent dread of my terrible uncle. I do believe he fears my uncle more than any other being upon the face of this earth."

"He's a qucer 'un, anyhow. I got on his trail t'other night. He was going to commit suicide in the river, but I stopped him, and he got mad and pitched me overboard in front of the boat."

"Oh! mercy!"

"Fact! I got out, though, a wetter but wiser man. Since then I haven't seen his nibs."

"It is very strange he should have attempted to commit suicide," Dora said, "although he has several times become very melancholy over being a hunted man."

"I suppose you have examined the contents of the safe—that is, you know it was your father's wish that you should become your foster-brother's wife?"

"Yes. That is known to me, but it is a matter of very little importance, as Ned and I have both agreed that such a match is undesirable for either of us. Ned has sworn to stick by me through thick and thin, but he loves a Western girl, and will marry her some day, no doubt."

"Well, before we can do much for you, Miss Dore, it will be necessary to find this fellow, Shields, and obtain the last will of your father. This will not be the hardest job, however. How we will force Stephen Dore to give up your rightful fortune, except by law, is not quite so plain to me, and you are aware that the law is a tough customer to fight, except you have all the right on your side, and a power of money to back it up."

"I reckon, young feller, it won't be of any

need fer ye ter go ter law!" a disagreeable voice cried, and the door was burst open, and half a dozen rough-looking rowdies entered, headed by Bob Driscoll!

Each man grasped a dirk-knife except Driscoll, who instantly covered Mike with a bull-dog revolver.

"Not a peep, ye bla'guard!" the villainous detective growled. "Ye know none of the neighbors loves ye, an' ef ye try any monkey bizness we'll leave two of ye for the coroner to look at to-morry!"

Mike was taken so wholly by surprise that they had an undeniable "drop" on him before he could make a move.

His courage was not daunted, and he put on a bold front.

"Hello! What the blazes d'ye call this sort of thing?" he cried sternly. "What d'ye mean by breaking into my room in this fashion?"

"We mean that ther game belongs to We, Us and Company!" Driscoll declared, grimly, "an' we mean business. If ye try to raise an alarm, ye kin bet you'll never raise another one. Boys, bind and gag the cuss. Ef he attempts resistance I'll put a bullet through him. No fear any one will inquire into the cause of a pistol-report in these quarters, I assure you. If there is any trouble, there is more ways than one out of this building."

Mike at once saw that resistance was next to useless.

Driscoll's companions were of the roughest characters from the slums, and fit for any crime that would yield them gain, and Mike knew only too well that their leader was no better than were they.

Should he attempt to fight them off, there seemed little doubt but that he would be disabled—perhaps killed, while it was possible that both Nora and Dora would be used even as badly; so, when the roughs advanced, he made no move to frustrate their intention, until—

A sudden thought occurred to him.

Directly behind him was a window which opened into a court, or area, which was a distance of about twelve feet to the pave.

During his knock-about life, Mike had not failed to learn his little mite of athletics and gymnastics, and a sudden resolve entered his mind; he would try a desperate undertaking. If he received injury, it was no more than he was likely to be subjected to at the hands of Bob Driscoll.

As the roughs came toward him he suddenly turned a backward somerset. There was a crash, and a disappearance of window-sash, glass, Mike, and all.

The astonished roughs, with Driscoll at their head, sprung to the opening, with cries of astonishment, and glared down into the darkness below.

At the bottom lay the fragments of the window-sash, but the daring detective was not to be seen.

"He has escaped!" Driscoll cried, with an oath. "Quick! we must get out of this!"

They turned, seized Dora, threw a shawl over her head, and carried her bodily from the room.

A blow from Driscoll's vicious fist laid Nora senseless upon the floor.

Darker than the shades of Styx was Hester street that night, and the villains had no difficulty in getting their captive into the close cab that was waiting by the curb.

Driscoll and another man also got in, and the vehicle drove off.

At the corner of the next block, a sturdy and yet stylish figure darted out from the shadows, and began to give chase.

He found, however—for it was the Bowery Detective—that he was no match for the two horses in the race, and finally stopped, out of breath, and very much disappointed.

"They've got her, sure enough!" he gritted, "and Heaven only knows where they will take her. For the present I am baffled, but I'll swear it shall not be long. I'll yet find her."

Seeing no possible chance of immediately learning whither Dora was to be taken, Mike set out on his return to his lodgings, to see how Nora had fared; but on arriving at his room, he found Nora gone, and that none of the other occupants of the tenement appeared to know anything of what had occurred.

After a few moments of deliberation, he once more started forth.

Nora was undoubtedly safe; but what of Dora Dore?

She must be found, and that too, very soon, or the chances were she would never be heard of again.

First he made his way to a telegraph office on Broadway, and sent the following message:

"TO THE MAYOR OR CHIEF OF POLICE of Chicago, Ill.:
"Is David Dore, criminal, wanted? If so, for what, and price?"

He then hurried back to the Bowery, and to the lodging-house where Dore's room was located.

Inquiry of the manager revealed the fact that Dore was still in his room, which Mike regarded as good news.

"It is now but a matter of time and circumstances!" he muttered. "I have got to watch the every movement of Davy, in order to find out the whereabouts of Dora. Driscoll, or some of his gang will surely communicate with David, and that, too, very likely, before any harm is done to Dora."

And, just one hour later, Mike had the satisfaction of seeing Dore leave the lodging-house.

It was now to be a game of shadowing!

CHAPTER X.

ON THE TRAIL.

ON leaving the lodging-house, David Dore looked sharply around him as if suspicious that watchful eyes were upon him; but Mike was quartered in a dark doorway across the way, and the keen gaze of the arch villain failed to see his enemy.

Walking along the Bowery to Prince street, and thence to Crosby street and thence into Marion street, David Dore entered one of the groggeries on this street, and remained within the ordinary space of time for a man to quaff a glass of beer.

He then reappeared, and looked cautiously up and down the street.

In a doorway, where shadows were dense enough to conceal a human form, stood Mike, watching his prey with the eyes of a hawk.

It was now plainly evident to him that Dore suspected that he was followed; and this was precisely what Mr. Dore did believe, although, as yet, only intuition excited the suspicion.

He gazed inquiringly toward Mike's place of concealment, and took a couple of steps in that direction, as if impressed with the idea that he would find an enemy lurking there.

He, however, immediately desisted from his purpose, and finally starting off up the street, he went perhaps a hundred yards, then wheeled, abruptly, and looked back.

Evidently he expected to catch his pursuer in the act of dogging his footsteps, but the street, apparently, was wholly deserted.

Mike had anticipated a move of this kind, and had very wisely kept to his covert.

Dore remained long enough to light a cigar, and then set out briskly.

Half-expecting he would look around every few minutes, Mike took up the pursuit, slowly.

The "wanted" man went directly to Broadway, and then north through that thoroughfare to Thirty-ninth street, and then over to the vicinity of the North River.

Here he disappeared so suddenly that Mike was puzzled. He did not see his prey enter any building, nor did he see him leave the sidewalk—yet it was an undeniable fact that the man was gone.

For half an hour the Bowery boy scouted about the neighborhood and "took in" the visible points, but without much satisfaction.

Dore had disappeared, and that was all there was of it, and Mike finally came to the conclusion that there was little use for him to continue the search any further in that direction.

Accordingly he made his way back to Ninth avenue, and took the Elevated cars for downtown.

Although pretty well tired out, he was still game. There was no sleep in his eyes, as long as there was a possible chance to obtain a clew.

On his way down-town he indulged in a careful deliberation, and the result of it was he made his way to the Bowery lodging-house where David Dore held forth.

It happened that Jem June, the manager of the establishment, was alone in his dingy office, which, fragrant with the fumes of bad tobacco, was also liberally decorated with lithographs of stage favorites of more or less prominence.

Through "steering" June out of a bunco game, once upon a time, Mike had won the manager's hearty friendship, and therefore he felt warranted in requesting a return of favors.

To use the popular slang, "there was nothing slow about June," and he set out a box of cigars the moment the young detective entered.

"Evening to ye, Mike!" he saluted. "'Ow's the bulls and bears?"

"The bovine rather has the bear on his horns, Jem, and it devolves upon you to liberate the latter *genus* by allowing a little strategy to be performed within the precincts of your dormitory!" Mike announced, with serio-comic gravity.

June stared.

"I fail to catch on," he said, elevating his heels upon the office table. "Will ye please be more explicit?"

"I will endeavor to explain!" Mike said, lighting up. "You have a lodger, I believe, by the name of David Dore?"

Business-like, June referred to the register in front of him, and announced that Mr. David Dore did room there, in Room 41; although he had previously posted the young detective as to the fact, at that young gentleman's solicitation.

"Is Mr. Dore in his room?" was Mike's next query.

Again June referred, but this time it was to his key-rack.

"Dore is not in, Michael!" he announced, with the air of a Metropolitan Hotel clerk. Then he condescended to add: "What particular interest have you in the aforesaid Dore?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I propose to slam it!" Mike declared, grimly. "That is to say, I mean to go trapping for foxes, and collar a little fur, to line my pocketbook. Did you ever see this?" and he exhibited his badge, whereat the lodging-house manager whistled.

"I see! I see!" he commented.

"And you likewise perceive the enormity of the importance of my present visit. This royal rascal, Dore, is a villain of the first water, and it is my business, as a representative of the requirements of legal jurisdiction, to investigate the way and means of Davy's manner of subsistence, and so forth. Therefore, suspecting that David will soon return, laden down with the spoils of a nocturnal pilgrimage, I desire to be granted the privilege of concealing myself in his room, hoping to hear much that will in the future embellish the police records, and make news for the penny daily periodicals of the present time."

And after delivery of this bit of talk, Mike seized upon his jaw, as if in fear it would break.

Jem June put up his hands, imploringly.

"Don't!" he said. "Another infliction of that kind, will be my death."

"Well, I'll drop on the dictionary, then. In plain, solid Latin, I want you to let me into Dore's room, so that when he returns, I can hear and see all that transpires. I'm working up a serious case, Jem, and my success all depends on getting into his room."

"Can't do it, young man—can't do it. That would be an offense for which I might get a long term of imprisonment!"

"Bah! Nonsense! What are the laws? Is not every citizen expected to lend justice a helping hand? I say, Jem June, I'm goin' to occupy David's room, and if you don't aid and abet me in my plans, I'll pull you up before police court for being Dore's accomplice in crime. Oh! but there's nothing slow about me!"

June was not a city-bred individual, nor were his intellectual accomplishments of the highest order, and he really knew very little about the laws; hence, was not certain but what Mike could make him trouble, of which, in his honest heart, he had a great horror.

After a little parley, he consented to Mike's proposition, and within a few minutes the de-

tective was under the bed, which Dore was to occupy, should he come in.

It was a cramped and uncomfortable position; but with true detective patience, Mike waited, satisfied he would learn enough to repay him for his trouble.

It was three o'clock in the morning, ere a key turned in the lock, David Dore then entered the room, closing and securing the door after him.

Mike got a glimpse of his face, to see that it reflected satisfaction and triumph in a superlative degree.

It told to Mike that the villain was cognizant of Dora's capture, and had very likely seen her.

Dore appeared fatigued, however, and threw off his coat with a growl.

"Well, the bird is caged once more, and if she escapes this time it will be something like a miracle!" he audibly muttered. "That fellow Driscoll is a faithful dog, and he'll not be apt to let her escape, when by vigilance for a short time, he can lay his hand upon ten thousand dollars. Oh, no!"

"So Driscoll is the jailer, eh?" Mike mused, "and the girl is still alive and safe. So far, so good! The important thing is to find out where Driscoll has his bird caged. If Dore can't vouchsafe me the information, there's another way to find out. Inspector Byrnes can easily furnish men to watch Driscoll's movements."

Dore did not further express his thoughts in words, but took a drink of liquor from a pocket flask, and then threw himself upon the bed, without disrobing.

If the sleep of the unrighteous is not sound, Dore's case must have been particularly an exception, for his heavy snoring soon proclaimed him to be in a deep sleep.

The first streaks of early dawn began to shoot in at the window, and warned Mike that what was to be done must be done quickly.

Creeping cautiously from beneath the bed, he took a good look at the sleeper to make sure that he was wholly unconscious; then he looked about him for some means of binding Dore's feet and ankles.

Finding nothing more convenient, he bound them with the two towels on the rack, which he first wetted, then twisted for the purpose.

The liquor Dore had imbibed, helped to deaden his slumber, so that he did not awaken, and Mike went through his work without arousing the sleeper.

When David Dore awakened, he found the Bowery Detective sitting on the bed beside him, toying with a dangerous-looking knife.

"Sh! Not a peep or I'll stick ye!" Mike admonished. "I mean bizness, Davy, and if you don't want to die before the law gives you a chance, you'll be discreet. Otherwise the coroner will be called here to make an inquest during the coming day. D'ye hear me?"

"I fancy I am not deaf," Dore growled, making an unavailing attempt to burst his linen bonds. "You infernal young whelp of Satan, what do you mean by this sort of business? Release me at once!"

"When the swallows homeward fly, Davy, perhaps I may—that dependin' altogether on

how you conduct yerself. Ye see, Davy, I'm dead on ter yer little racket, an' I intend ter work ye the same as I would a gold mine. If ye pan out well, so good! If ye don't, all hopes o' yer bein' a success aire a dead open-an'-shut failure. So you see there's but one course for you to pursue, an' it behooves you to travel along it faster than on a jog-trot, you bet."

"Bah! You are a barking cur. If I get free, I'll make you sorry for this indignity!" the villain declared, savagely. "I'll cry for help, and have you arrested, curse you!"

"Try it on, old rooster. If you try anything of *that* sort, I'll mighty quick shove ye inter the Tombs for the murder of Thomas Dore's wife!" Mike warned. "The fact is, Davy, your ball of yarn aire about run out to the end, and ye might as well make a clean out an' out breast of matters, an' thus stand a chance o' getting legal leniency."

"I'll do nothing of the kind," the villain declared. "D'ye think I fear an upstart like you? I guess not! You'll find you've got hold of the wrong sort of a bad man when you try to work me."

"That's where you mistake, Davy. A man of you're bad character is just the sort of a hairpin I like to bend into shape. Ye see, there's more fun in working a real out-and-outer, than there is a tame, ninety-nine cent villain—more real enthusiasm in a victory of this sort. And, as it happens that I have you completely at my mercy, you will see that I've every reason for enjoying the situation to a greater extent than you can."

"You are remarkably good of gab, for a green kid; but, pray tell us how you presume to have gained any power over me?"

"Easy enough. Believing you are wanted in Chicago, I have telegraphed declaring my capability of laying hands on you at a minute's notice. I expect an answer early in the morning, announcing that an officer has been sent to take you to the scene of your former crimes!"

Dore looked uneasy at this.

"You lie!" he gritted.

"Bet your life I don't!" Mike calmly assured. "I overheard your interesting conversation with your brother Stephen yesterday, and concluded it was about time for me to take a hand in the game. It's a real dramatic scheme you've got up against Dora Dore, ain't it? But you'll find to your sorrow that it won't work."

"Won't it, though?"

"No, it won't! I'll knock smithereens out of that scheme before I'm off this trail, you can bet on *that*! Now, sir, what I desire to know is—where 've you got the girl shut up?"

"What girl?"

"Oh! don't be so innocent! Where is Dora Dore?"

"How d'ye suppose I know, confound you! D'ye think I'm a general directory?"

"You're a general idiot to suppose that you can shut my eye up. Dora Dore was abducted last night—for it's how 'most morning, from my room, and Driscoll abducted her for *you*. You afterward went to the place where she is held a captive. I dogged you for a ways, but finally lost track of you. When you re-entered this room awhile ago, I heard you say that she was

caged, which proves that you were at the cage. Now, sir, you've got to tell me where Dora is secreted!"

"May I never see another sunrise if I do!" the villain sneered. "If you think I'd give up the game, young feller, when it's all in our own hands, you're the most mistaken youthful jack-ass that ever brayed."

"So you are inclined to be mulish, are you?" Mike growled, his face hardening. "It won't work with me. Davy, I'm not a perfect saint, by any means, and I give you fair warning that if I don't get a straight and truthful answer from you, you will get seriously hurt."

"I'll never tell you—I'll see you in purgatory first, you hear me, you whelp!" and the desperate schemer looked decidedly as if he meant it.

Mike allowed no trace of disappointment to cross his face.

"I've a mind to knife you for your obstinacy!" he declared, grimly. "I've a better plan than that, however. I'll go out, get an officer, and escort you to less comfortable quarters at one of our police stations. When the proper authority arrives from Chicago, you will undoubtedly be treated to a picturesque trip across the continent as far as Chic-ia-go!"

And rising from the bed, he made a move to leave the room.

David Dore flung a torrent of curses after him.

"Go on with your apple-cart! You'll see where you'll come out. Put me in jail if you dare, and I'll outwit you then. Go ahead, I say, but look you out for your life once I get my freedom! I'll cut your heart out as sure's there is a sharp knife to be found in America!"

CHAPTER XI.

CAGING A "CORKER."

MIKE paid no attention to the threat, but left the room and locked the door after him.

Descending to the office, he found the light turned low and Jem June snoring away as he sat tipped back in his office chair.

Awakening him by a rough shake, Mike gave him the keys and said:

"Mind, now, if there's any noise up there, you go and make the fellow dry up. I'll be back to arrest him directly."

He had fully made up his mind on his course of action as being the most sensible thing he could do.

To allow David Dore his freedom once more would be literally equivalent to signing poor Dora's death-warrant.

Straight to the nearest police-station he went, and after making a complaint against Bob Driscoll, returned to the Bowery, accompanied by a couple of officers.

Dore was taken in custody and conducted to the station-house, but not without his treating Mike and the policemen to a fearful torrent of abuse.

Warning the sergeant not to allow the prisoner to be admitted to bail if it could be helped, until he (Mike) got advice from Chicago, the detective once more took himself back to the Bowery.

It was now broad daylight, and Mike's first action was to get away with a good breakfast

at one of the respectable restaurants. His next move was to visit the telegraph-office from which he had dispatched to Chicago.

A message had just been received, which said:

"Dave Dore wanted. Hold him until special officer with requisitions arrives."

It was signed by the chief of police.

"He don't mention any reward," Mike muttered. "I'll bet, if there is one, I'll sock in my claim for it. This playin' detective for nothing, and boarding one's self in the bargain, ain't hardly what it's cracked up to be. Reckon, mebbe, ef Dora gits her rights, she'll divvy up sensible-like."

This, however, was something akin to counting chickens before they were hatched.

From the telegraph office he made his way to Sixth avenue and Fourteenth street, and spent a full hour in watching the salesgirls as they came along and entered Macy's to begin their day's work.

But, though he watched, he saw nothing of Nora, and at once formed the conclusion that some ill had befallen her from the trouble of the previous night.

Knowing where she dwelt, he turned his steps toward the dismal street, and hurried along anxiously.

In passing a police station he was just in time to see a trio of men carrying a man inside from an ambulance.

Some intuition he could not account for caused him to follow into the station to get a glimpse of the unfortunate's face. What, then, was his surprise to see lying upon the stretcher no less a personage than the redoubtable Peleg Prancer!

He was insensible, and upon his brow was a ragged wound, where he had been struck by some rough instrument or object.

"Hello! I know this man!" Mike cried. "His name is Prancer. Where did ye find him?"

"Lyin' down on one o' the East River docks," was the answer. "Guess some one tapped him an' throwed him into the river, and he crawled out ag'in for his clothes. He's the second hospital case this morning."

"He must not go there!" Mike said, exhibiting his badge. "There is important business on foot for him, and I do not believe his injury will disable him after he recovers consciousness. I will see that he is cared for."

Restoratives were promptly applied, and in due time Peleg Prancer opened his eyes.

He looked grimly enough at the officers, but his face lighted up a little at sight of the Bowery Detective.

"By hokey! Is that you, younker?" he cried, sitting up and grinning at the young blood as if pleased. "Glad to see you. What's the matter of me?"

"Nothing much, only some one has been rapping you on the head. Didn't you know about it?"

Prancer scratched his head.

"Well, now that I come to think about it, I reckon I do. I had an appointment to meet some one down by East River last night, and was waitin', when, furst I knowed, I didn't know nothing. I was conscious of tumbling

into the river, and had sense enough to get out. That's all I remember occurring until now."

"I presume you have an idea who assaulted you?" Mike said. "I have."

"It does not matter!" Prancer hastily replied. "Come along with me, boy, till I get my wound tinkered, and we can get matters fixed up later on."

The officers were not inclined to let Prancer go, but at Mike's demand Prancer was permitted to accompany him from the station house.

They went to the nearest doctor, where the wound was dressed, after which they set out *en route* down-town, Mike having abandoned the idea of hunting up Nora for the present.

On the way the subject of the assault upon Prancer was more fully discussed.

"You were to meet Bob Driscoll, weren't you?" Mike asked.

"Yes, I was. What of it?"

"Lots! I thought you'd soon get your fill of that snoozer!"

"You think he struck me, do ye?"

"I should snicker! He's as bad at heart as any cut-throat in the city. 'D'ye miss any collat?"

"No. I didn't have much with me, and there's none of it gone."

"What were you to meet Driscoll in such an out-of-the-way place for?" Mike queried, eying the Yankee keenly.

"He claimed he had found where my daughter was, and if I met him there he would take me to her."

"Ha! ha! ha! And you were fool enough to believe him?"

"I considered his word good, although my confidence in him has not been growing since last I met you."

"I was afraid you'd git bit. It's lucky, however, that you're no worse for wear. I know this Driscoll and all about him, and I trust that we'll find him behind the bars before sunset!"

"Ye don't say? What will that be for?"

"For deviltry in general, but most important just now for abduction."

"What?"

"For abduction."

"Not—not of my Gracie?"

"No—not of your Gracie, but of your daughter, Dora, Mr. Thomas Dore!" and Mike laughed.

The Yankee started violently, and gave Mike a sharp, searching glance.

"What d'ye mean?" he growled, evidently in bad humor.

"I mean that the Prancer racket won't work worth a cent. Its b'iler is cl'ar bu'sted, and 'tain't fit for use no longer. Ye see, I've investigated the hull affair, Thomas, and all that I have found out wouldn't go inside of a dictionary. Prancer are very good to stuff turkeys with, but no good fer stuffin' Bowery shang-higs, you can bet! So you see, you and I might as well understand each other, first as last. You're Thomas Dore, an' ye seeketh fer your royal brother, David, and your daughter, Dora!"

The scowl did not leave the man's face.

"Well, what if all you say is true?" he demanded curtly.

"A good deal to you mebbe. If you expect to win a respectable show in the game, you orter to hitch onter the right feller as can help ye to pull through. The fact is, Thomas, all your talk when I first met you was bosh. Why were you searching for Gracie?"

"Gracie is Dora Grace Dore."

"Ah, I see!"

"Well, you've cheek enough, that's one fact," Dore retorted, still in ill-humor. "I am rather averse to young men who cut their wisdom-teeth a week after birth. They generally have a superfluous sort of idea that they know more than their elders."

"And in many instances such is the fact of the case!" Mike unblushingly declared. "I don't pretend to be the seventh of a seventh, nor nothin' like that, but I generally know how to relish a square meal when I see it, or kick a square package lying on the sidewalk when I want to let my toes know they are growing too progressive."

"Well, go ahead and let me know how well you are informed about my business, since you claim it to be so much to my interest."

"I'll do it. I know that David Dore killed you, or thought he did—killed your wife, an' abducted your gal an' your foster-son. On comes your t'other brother, finds a will leavin' him all yer collat, which he appropriates like a little man, and makes himself comfortably safe from bein' troubled by David, by offerin' a big s'andin' reward fer him. David don't keer. He hangs on ter yer progeny wi' an eye ter the future. The aforesaid prod escapeth David, and the upshot of it is he turns up in New York, business and blood in his eye."

Thomas Dore's face grew inexpressibly stern just then.

"You are sure he is here?" he gritted, savagely.

"Just as sure as I am that Christmas comes but once a year. I had the pleasure of seeing him locked up in a police-station not over a couple of hours ago."

"Ha! Then take me there at once! For many a year I have longed to confront him, the accursed viper!"

"Whoa up, now! Don't get excited! You've got to let me run this machine, or I kick at one't."

"Go ahead, then, boy! Out with all you have to say. Where is my child?"

"That's jest sum'thin' I can't perzactly tell you, because I don't know."

He then went on to relate about how he had heard the compact between David and Stephen Dore; about his encounter with Ned Shields; and about the abduction of Dora, the night before, which later had resulted in the arrest of David Dore.

When the young detective had finished, Thomas Dore seized his hand warmly.

"Young man, you are well worthy of your small amount of self-conceit, and you're one after my liking. Uninvited you have taken hold of a case of but little interest to the ordinary detective, and developed much out of it. I heartily thank you. Henceforth, we will work together, hand in hand, but you shall have the guide, for I believe your knowledge of city life

gives you a great advantage over me. But no time must be lost."

"Right you be. A minute lost now is very apt to be a mile. Before anything can be done, we must await the arrival of the Chicago officer with the requisition papers—that is, before anything can be done with David Dore."

"Not so. I am possessed of the power to arrest him and take him back to Iowa. What charge did you have him arrested on?"

"Wife-murder."

Thomas Dore smiled.

"Did you mention *whose* wife he murdered?"

"By Jove! I did not. That's sufficient to clear him, if nothing else is preferred against him."

"Perhaps, yes. The best thing we can do is to hasten to the hearing!"

Mike glanced at his watch.

"You are right. We haven't a minute to spare. After we get that arranged, we must turn our attention to your other brother, Stephen Dore. It may not be amiss to keep a light shining on his movements, I reckon."

They hurried on at a brisk pace.

Directly, Mike once more glanced at his watch.

"Something tells me we shall be too late!" he said. "My watch was stopped when I looked at it a few moments ago. It is really later than I had any idea of."

At the first opportunity they ascertained the time, and found it was nearly after the time when magisterial hearings usually commenced.

When they arrived at the room where the police court hearings took place, they learned that, as no one was present to appear against Dore, when his case was called, his hearing had been postponed one day, and the Honorable Stephen Dore had gone his bail in the sum of two thousand dollars.

Sadly disappointed, the two searchers left the court-room, and adjourned to a neighboring saloon to compare notes.

"Something must be done, instantly!" Mike declared, "or it will be too late. No doubt an immediate attempt will be made to spirit away your daughter, or kill her, as you must see that David will seek to escape with great haste, regardless of two thousand dollars' bail, which is comparatively an insignificant sum, under such circumstances."

"You are right. But, what shall we do—what can we do?"

"The only thing I see to be done, is for you to go and swear out a warrant for his re-arrest, showing your authority and stating your reasons for doing so. A general alarm will then be given!"

This was at once done; then, at Mike's suggestion, they made their way to the residence of Stephen Dore.

Pompey, the negro servant, answered the summons, and bowed politely.

"Is Mr. Stephen Dore at home?" Mike asked.

"He am not, sah."

"Could you inform me where I will be apt to find him?"

"Deed, I cannot, sah. Marse Dore in town, sah."

"Has he an office in town?"

"No, sah."

"Does he ever hang around Wall street?"

"Dunno!"

"Is Miss Dore in, then?"

"No, sah—nobody in, sah!"

And bang! went the door, in the faces of the callers.

"Confound the imp of blackness. Fetch him to the door again while I choke the gizzard out of him!" Thomas Dore fumed.

"He's *non est* now!" Mike said. "We will do Wall street, and maybe find Stephen there."

They did go to Wall street, and spent a couple of hours there, looking into the "pens" and "dens" of the "bulls" and "bears," but nowhere did they find Stephen Dore.

"I fear we're on the wrong track," Thomas Dore said, in a tone plainly telling that he was discouraged. "My poor daughter may be murdered before we can get to her rescue."

"We must not despair. We may run upon the much-wanted clew before we have the least expectation of so doing."

And he was right.

They had not gone two blocks, when they suddenly Bob saw Driscoll and Ned Shields coming down the opposite side of the street.

"In here," Mike gritted, pulling Dore into an office area. "The game is at last ours."

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRAIL NARROWS DOWN.

DRISCOLL and his companion passed down the street.

"Where are they bound for?" Thomas Dore demanded, glaring after them.

"That's something I'm not just prepared to tell—it's what we must find out," Mike replied. "Do you know that man who accompanies Driscoll?"

"Not that I am aware of. Who is he?"

"Your adopted son, of yore—Elward Shields!"

"What? And he with Driscoll? Then Driscoll is not false to me."

"Don't you fool yourself; Ned Shields is wanted out of the way nearly as much as you are yourself, or your daughter, and I'll bet a new hat against a Bowery bat that he's now being led to the slaughter. There's work before us."

"You have told me that Ned possesses the will. Although I still live, it may be necessary for me to possess that."

"Right again. We must follow them, and not lose track of them. We shall have to be very careful they don't scent pursuit, and throw us off the trail."

They took up the pursuit, keeping far enough behind Driscoll and his companion to prevent the chase being discovered.

It was a long pursuit.

It really seemed that the renegade detective—for he was really that—was trying to throw pursuers off the trail, for he changed the course from one thoroughfare to another, until it really would have puzzled the wits of a surveyor to decide their ultimate destination.

They frequently dropped into saloons for a drink, and ere long, by his unsteady gait, it be-

came evident that Ned Shields was feeling the effects of his potations—a fact which caused Mike to remark:

"You see how reasonable is my opinion of Driscoll, don't you? He is getting Shields paralyzed, and no doubt will treat him to the same dose that he did you."

But little doubt now that Driscoll had some evil intention in view.

Slowly but surely they were proceeding in a northeasterly course, and nearing the East River.

It now became noticeable that nearly every saloon was visited, and that Shields was really getting beastly drunk—so much so that Driscoll had to take him by the arm.

"The puddin' is gittin' pretty near ripe enough to dip!" Mike observed.

"You are right. If that scoundrel pushes the boy overboard, I'll shoot him."

"No, you won't!"

"Why not, pray?"

"Because in losing him we are losing the best possible opportunity of findin' Dora."

"True enough."

"You bet! You jest let the Bowery Detective manage the helm. If Driscoll pushes the pigeon in, we'll be there, and you'll rush forward to the rescue. I'll keep him. Driscoll will take leg bail for security. I'll take the same kind of bail, after him, and if I drop his trail I'll never tackle another one. After you get out of the rescue biz, you come to Thirty-Ninth street and North River, and wait about the vicinity until I join you."

It was so settled.

The chase seemed nearing its end, as the pursued approached the water-front.

Driscoll evidently had "timed" his arrangements perfectly.

They soon went out upon a pier, where there were no visible signs of business in the immediate vicinity.

Far below was to be seen the skeleton structure of the Brooklyn Bridge.

It was noontide, and a man could have dropped into the river and drowned at that particular point with but little possibility of any one noticing the mishap or crime.

Driscoll was talking to his more than half-stupefied companion as they advanced upon the wharf.

What he was saying was apparent to his pursuers—he was telling Shields that they would row across the river.

As they neared the water's edge, Driscoll gave a searching glance around; then suddenly throwing his leg in front of Shields, he tripped him, and sent him spinning headlong into the fast-flowing tide, and instantly turning, skurried from the vicinity, like a frightened deer, looking neither right nor left until he considered himself out of danger.

He then slackened his pace and gazed searchingly around him.

He was no longer in sight of the dock, and he saw no one in pursuit of him.

So he resumed his journey at a reasonable pace, looking back only now and then, and at such times seeing no sign whatever of pursuit.

Yet like an avenging Nemesis, the Bowery

Detective was on his trail; surely and cautiously he was dogging Driscoll to his den.

The latter, as Mike had surmised, was making his way toward Thirty-ninth street and the North River.

Here, then, or somewhere adjacent to the vicinity, was Dora Dore concealed.

If he failed to find her, Mike was ready to declare that he would give up the profession.

The fair face and winning manners of the young heiress had deeply impressed him, and although he had no aspirations so high-minded as giving her more than a passing thought, he was eager to be instrumental in restoring her to her rights.

The pursuit was kept up without discovery or incident worthy of mention, until they were near the North River.

Then greater caution became more imperative; it was too risky for the young detective to get near enough to the object of his pursuit to be recognized, and therefore he had to keep at a considerable distance behind.

Finally, when Driscoll was pretty close in the vicinity of the river, he suddenly wheeled abruptly and looked steadily back.

Nothing loth, Mike came steadily on, and finally knew that his advance had lulled any suspicions Driscoll may have entertained; for he turned and entered a house near where he had halted.

Keen as those of a lynx, were the eyes of Mike, and their gaze never left the doorway where Driscoll had disappeared, until they had marked out, beyond mistake, the exact location, leading to the renegade's rendezvous.

It was a dingy row of bricks, evidently tenements, and occupied by a number of families, although the house that Driscoll entered had more the appearance of being tenantable for but one family, as a defaced bill of "To Let," was pasted on the door.

"That's the place!" Mike muttered, "and it now is but a matter of time ere I win. It's wait, be watchful and patient!"

He did not approach nearer to the dwelling, via Thirty-fourth street, but retraced his footsteps, a ways, and took up his position where he could keep a distant eye upon the building, with little danger of being particularly noticed.

For over an hour he kept up his vigil, and then, to his surprise, he saw no less a person than Nora, the ex-peanut-vender approaching.

"Oh! I'm so glad to find you," she said. "I know where Dora is concealed!"

"Humph!" and he chucked her under the chin. "So do I. But how did you find out?"

"I tracked Driscoll this morning."

"I tracked him awhile ago. I've been shadowing here, since. Have you any idea whether David Dore is down there or not?"

"Don't think he is. I've been spying around, too, but I've seen no one come in or out, except Driscoll, and a nabob-looking man awhile ago."

"Ah! Did he have gray hair and beard?"

"Yes!"

"That was Stephen Dore!" Mike mused under his breath. Then aloud to Nora:

"Has he come out, yet?"

"No."

"Then we want to shadow that building with

unceasing vigilance. Ah! here come Thomas and Ned."

It was even so. Thomas Dore and Edward Shields now came up, both wet; but as the weather was warm, it mattered not.

Ned's unceremonious ducking had thoroughly dissipated the effects of all of the liquor he had imbibed at Driscoll's expense, and he was "right side up with care," once more.

After a short chat, and mutual explanations, it was agreed that all hands should keep a close watch upon the den, where Dora was imprisoned, and that no one should be permitted to escape, without being arrested.

The first man to leave the house was Stephen Dore, and as he came up the street, Mike intercepted him.

"One moment, Mr. Dore," he said, in firm but respectful tones. "I shall have to request you not to proceed further, just yet, without my permission."

"Indeed! Who are you?" was the haughty demand.

"I, sir, am generally dubbed Detective Mike—Michael Maverick, at your service. I am a detective, sir, and place you under arrest."

The rich man's face paled somewhat.

"What d'ye mean?" he growled, frowning. "This is nonsense."

"Nothing of the sort, sir. When I tell you that I overheard your conversation with your brother, David, yesterday, and that I know that Dora Dore is imprisoned yonder, and that it is designed to take her life to-night, you will see how well I am posted. Mr. Dore, do you want the world of New York to know of your complicity in a murder?"

The proud man shuddered.

"By Heaven! no!" he uttered, hoarsely.

"Of course you don't. Perhaps there is a possible loop-hole for you to escape. Out of pity for your daughter, I may be able to spare you. Is David Dore down yonder?"

"No."

"Sure?"

"I give you my word."

"Do you know where he is?"

"I do not. I expect he is laying low."

"He'd better. Is the girl there?"

"She is."

"Safe?"

"As far as I know, for the present."

"Driscoll is there?"

"No. He slid out the back way, and has gone in search of David."

"Is the girl alone?"

"Yes. She is bound, and chloroformed, or drugged."

"Stephen Dore, tell the honest truth—don't you feel ashamed of yourself for having any hand in this most infamous scheme?"

Dore looked guilty.

"You are right, I do. I cannot account for my strange weakness."

"Well, be that as it may, there are possibly two chances for you. You see that man over yonder?"

"Yes."

"That is Thomas Dore!"

"Well?"

"He wants his money and his daughter."

Will you give him up every cent that is his, if he will allow you to leave New York, and avoid the disgrace you deserve?"

For the moment the man hesitated, and then answered:

"By Heaven, I will."

"Then await me here, until I find if Thomas Dore agrees to the terms."

Mike crossed the street, and had a long and earnest conversation with Thomas Dore.

When he again returned he said:

"It is thus settled for your part. Thomas is to get his rights, and you are to remain or go, as you please, but there is never to be any tie of relationship recognized between you henceforth and for all time."

Why write more in detail?

Dora Dore was promptly rescued from her captivity, and a joyous reunion took place between her and her father and foster-brother.

Then, after setting the police to watch for Driscoll and David Dore, Mike escorted Dora to the St. Nicholas, while Thomas Dore and Stephen set out to effect a proper restoration of rights; and it was, as far as was ever known, satisfactorily settled.

At any rate, Thomas Dore got his money back, with interest, and when a short time after, Stephen Dore left New York, accompanied by his daughter, it was not as a poor man.

Tracy Travis turned out about as badly as the average young man of his unscrupulous class; gambled, drank, married twice in a month, and had to suddenly disappear.

Two days after the settlement, among persons who viewed two corpses that lay in the Morgue, were Stephen and Thomas Dore.

The unfortunates had been found drowned in North River, and were David Dore and Bob Driscoll.

Probably the two Dores were the only ones who ever really knew their identity, and they locked the secret in their own breasts.

To say that Mike, the Bowery Detective, received a substantial reward would be "drawing it mild," for he could afford to retire from the "perfish" and marry; and marry he did—Dora!

And Nora so captivated Ned Shields that he got over his unsteady habits, and became a shining light in business circles.

It was afterward found out that David Dore and Tracy Travis were both connected in the heiress scheme as well as in a counterfeiting business, to which the letters in Travis's pocket-book undoubtedly had reference.

THE END.

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